

BALTIMORE

EMPTY GRAVES



MIKE
MIGNOLA

CHRISTOPHER
GOLDEN

PETER
BERGTING

MICHELLE
MADSEN



Baltimore's allies relive their own troubled pasts while they bury their fallen friends. Can they uncover the origins of the Blood-Red Witch before she awakens the Red King—the devil behind all the world's evil?

BALTIMORE

Empty Graves





BALTIMORETM

EMPTY GRAVES

VOLUME SEVEN

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CHAPTER ONE





ST.
PETERSBURG,
RUSSIA.
JUNE 3, 1920.

PLEASE...
MERCY...

YOU AND YOUR
SISTERS GAVE
UP ALL HOPE FOR
MERCY WHEN
YOU PLEDGED
YOURSELVES
TO THE RED
KING.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT
MY MISTRESS WANTS
WITH YOUR FRIEND'S
CORPSE...BUT IF
YOU WANT TO FIND
THE BLOOD-RED
WITCH...

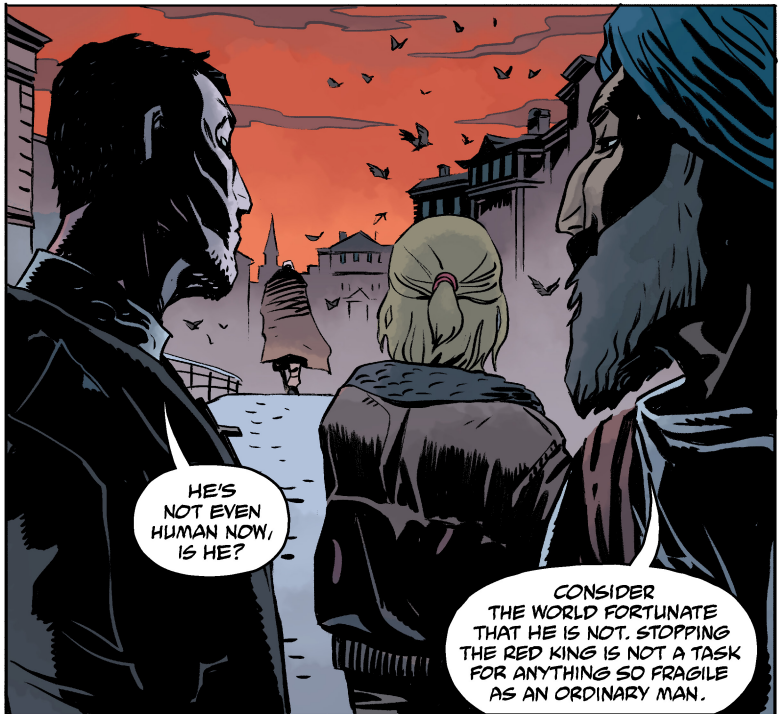
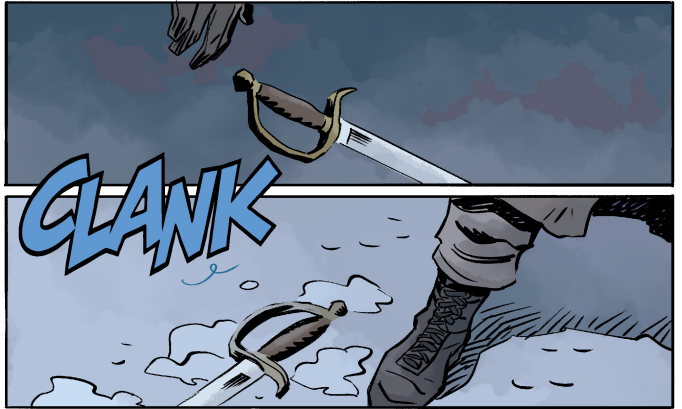
...BEGIN IN
CONSTANTINOPLE...
WITH HER MOTHER...
THE PRINCESS
RUKIYE...

HER
MOTHER, THE
PRINCESS?

I
SWEAR IT.
NOW GIVE ME THE
RELEASE YOU
PROMISED.

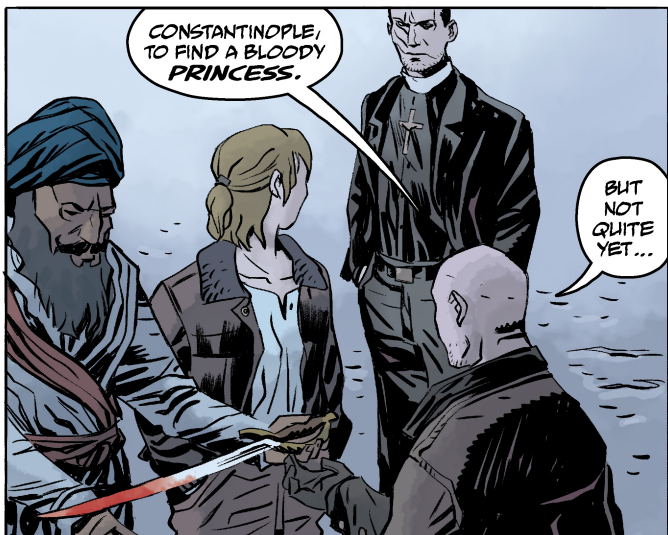
GLADLY.

SHUNKKK





WHERE
DO WE GO
FROM
HERE?



CONSTANTINOPLE,
TO FIND A BLOODY
PRINCESS.

BUT
NOT
QUITE
YET...







IF IT WERE MY GRAVE, ANY OF THESE MEN WOULD'VE TAKEN A TURN WITH THE SHOVEL. I WON'T DO ANY LESS.



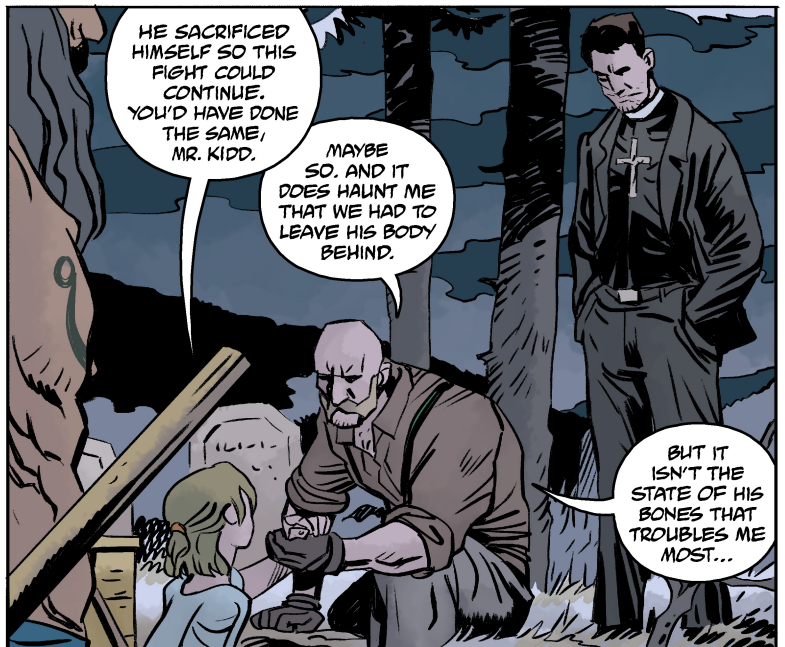
I ONLY HOPE THAT WHEN IT COMES TIME FOR MY OWN FUNERAL, THERE'S A BODY TO PRAY OVER.



AGREED...



"...I HATE TO IMAGINE WHAT'S BECOME OF CAPTAIN AISCHROS'S REMAINS."



HE SACRIFICED HIMSELF SO THIS FIGHT COULD CONTINUE. YOU'D HAVE DONE THE SAME, MR. KIDD.

MAYBE SO. AND IT DOES HAUNT ME THAT WE HAD TO LEAVE HIS BODY BEHIND.

BUT IT ISN'T THE STATE OF HIS BONES THAT TROUBLES ME MOST...



"...IT'S WHAT I FEAR
MAY HAVE BECOME
OF HIS SOUL."



STILL, THERE'S
NO GOING BACK,
IS THERE? NOT
FOR ANY OF
US.



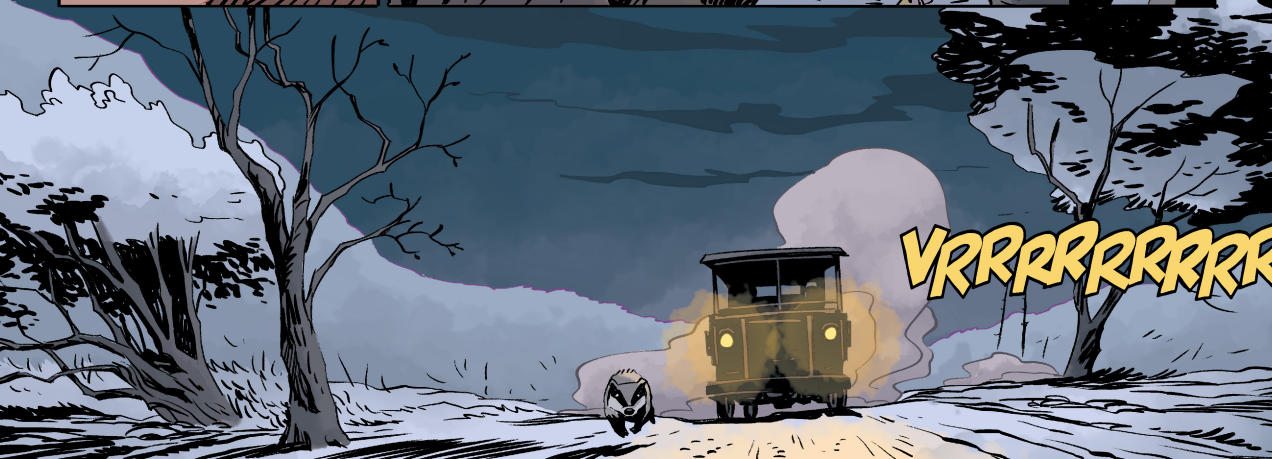
AS
UGLY AS
THE CAPTAIN'S
DEATH MUST
HAVE
BEEN...



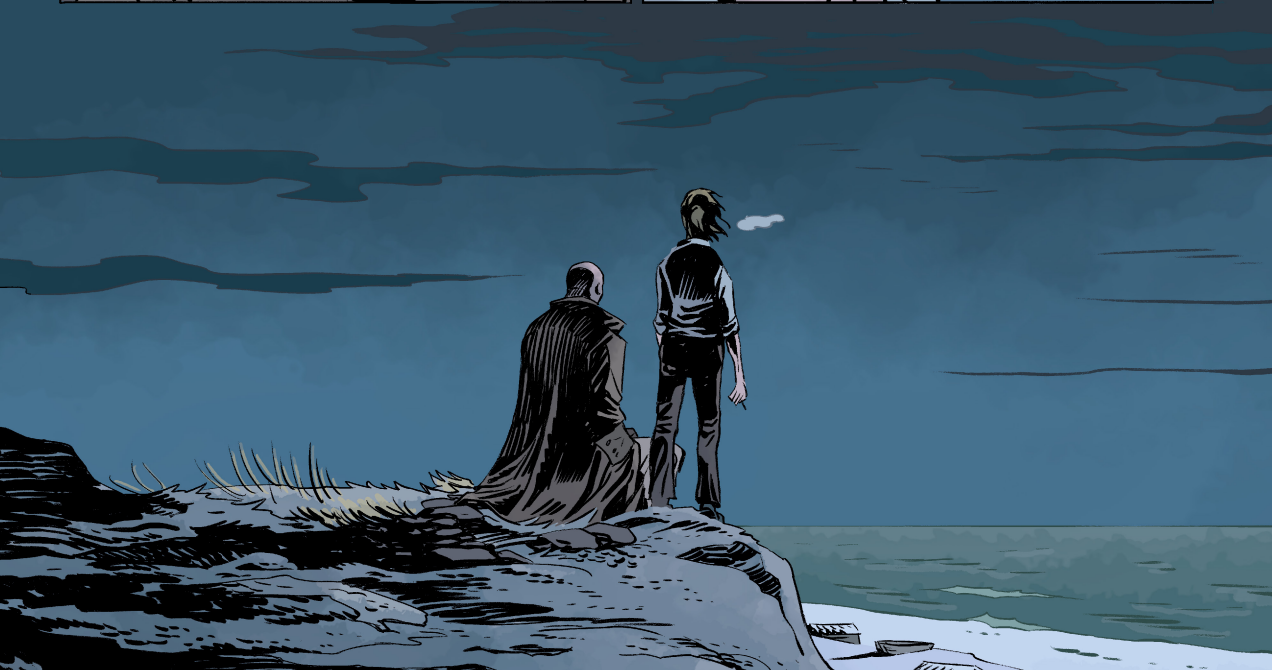
"...IT'S
CHILDRESS
WHO CONCERNS
ME NOW. WE
SAW HIM DIE,
AND WE SAW
THE BLOOD-RED
WITCH SPIRIT HIS
BODY AWAY..."



"...WHAT WE
DON'T KNOW
IS **WHY** SHE
TOOK HIM..."



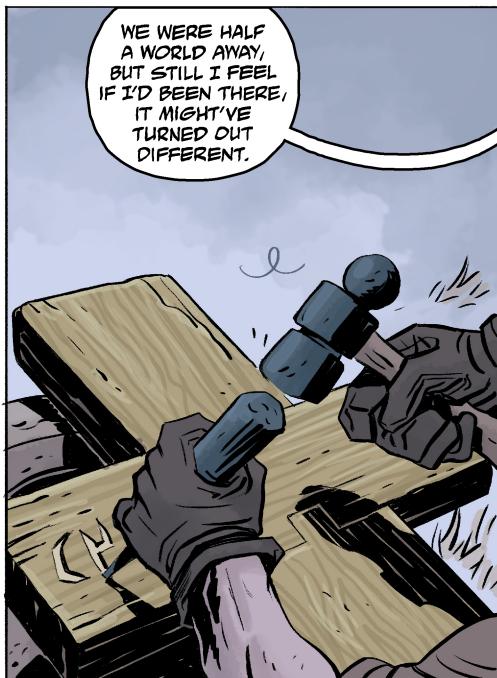




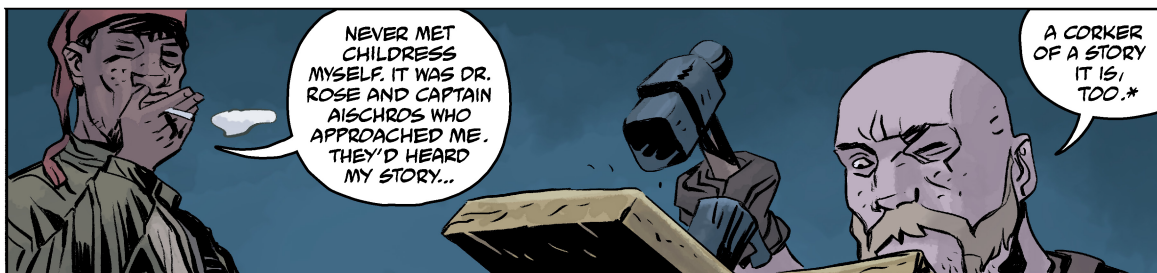


IT STILL DOESN'T SEEM REAL, CAPTAIN AISCHROS BEING DEAD. WITHOUT A BODY--

IF YOU'D SEEN IT HAPPEN, IT'D BE REAL ENOUGH TO YOU. BUT I TAKE YOUR MEANINGS. MR. CHILDRESS IS THE ONE WHO BROUGHT ME TO LORD BALTIMORE TO BEGIN WITH.

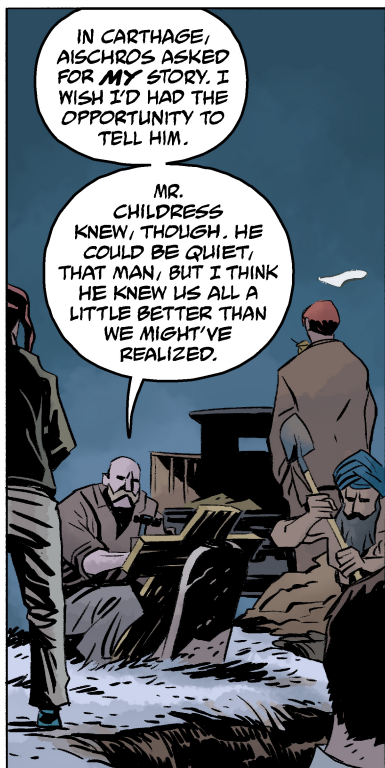


WE WERE HALF A WORLD AWAY, BUT STILL I FEEL IF I'D BEEN THERE, IT MIGHT'VE TURNED OUT DIFFERENT.



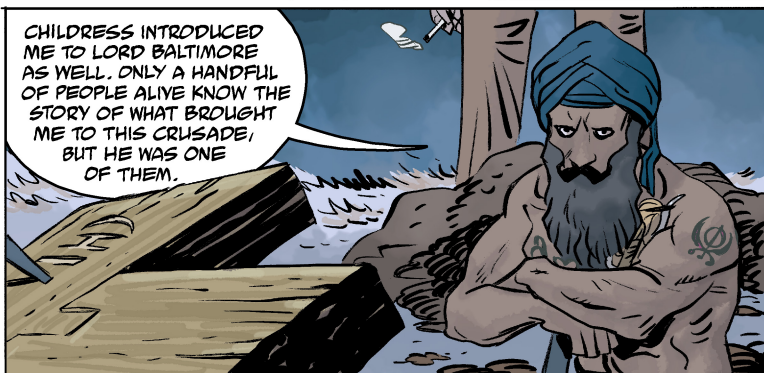
NEVER MET CHILDRESS MYSELF. IT WAS DR. ROSE AND CAPTAIN AISCHROS WHO APPROACHED ME. THEY'D HEARD MY STORY...

A CORKER OF A STORY IT IS, TOO.*



IN CARTHAGE, AISCHROS ASKED FOR *MY* STORY. I WISH I'D HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO TELL HIM.

MR. CHILDRESS KNEW, THOUGH. HE COULD BE QUIET, THAT MAN, BUT I THINK HE KNEW US ALL A LITTLE BETTER THAN WE MIGHT'VE REALIZED.



CHILDRESS INTRODUCED ME TO LORD BALTIMORE AS WELL. ONLY A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE ALIVE KNOW THE STORY OF WHAT BROUGHT ME TO THIS CRUSADE, BUT HE WAS ONE OF THEM.

I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR STORIES. IF YOU'LL BE THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO REMEMBER ME WHEN I DIE, I'D LIKE YOU TO KNOW WHY I FIGHT. I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHY *YOU* FIGHT.

***BALTIMORE:
THE CULT OF
THE RED KING
CHAPTER THREE**





"...IT BEGAN IN TANGANYIKA,
IN 1914. I WAS WITH INDIAN
EXPEDITIONARY FORCE B...



"...WE WERE RETURNING FROM THE CAMPAIGN
TO CAPTURE THE CITY OF TANGA, AND CAME
UPON A SMALL VILLAGE WHERE WE HOPED TO
REST AND TO TRADE FOR A MEAL OR TWO...



"...THERE
WERE ONLY
CHILDREN
THERE TO
MEET US."







COME, LITTLE ONE...



WE'LL FIND SOMEONE TO LOOK AFTER YOU.



YOU SMELL IT?



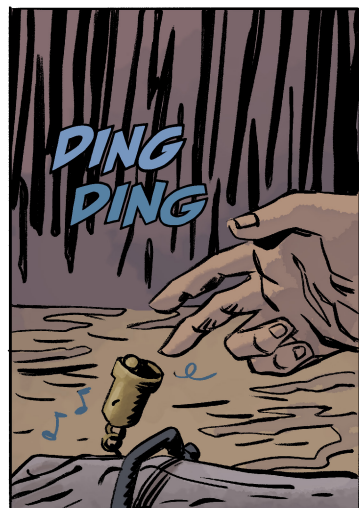
DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING.

YOU THINK THIS IS THE PLAGUE, HARISH? WE SAW NOTHING ON THE BODIES TO SUGGEST DISEASE... AND THE CHILDREN AREN'T INFECTED. ALSO, WHAT-EVER'S BEEN FEEDING ON THEM--

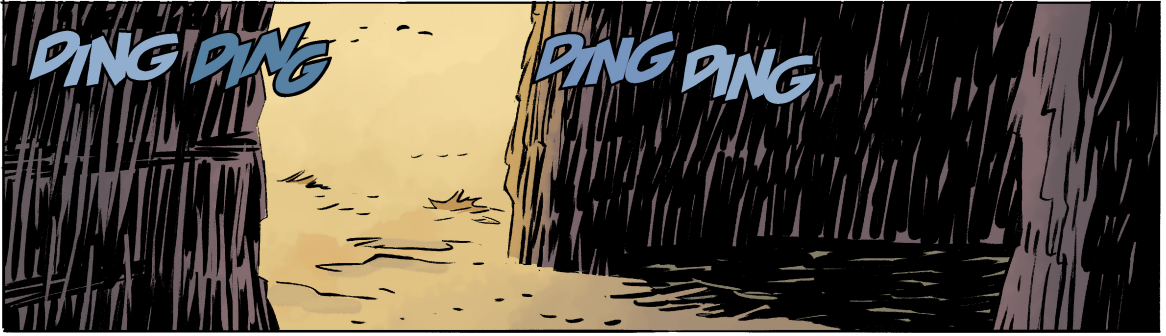


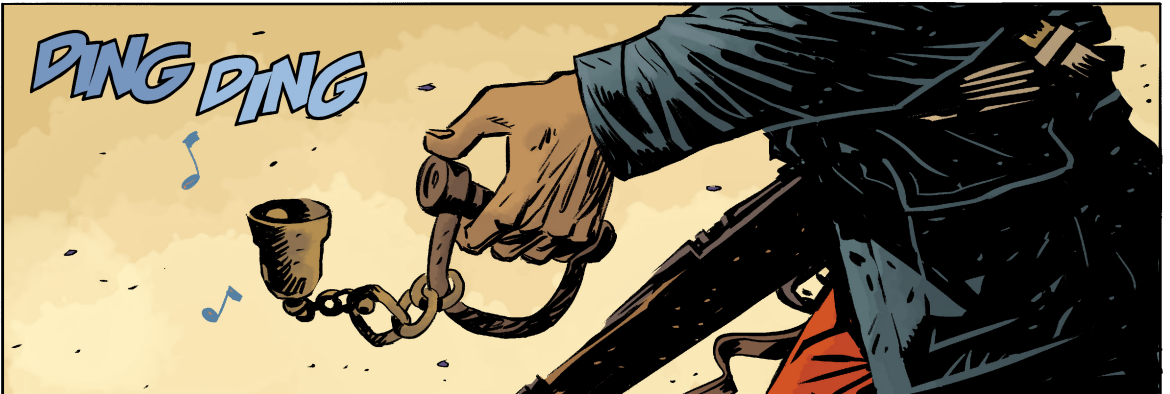
WOULD ALSO BE DEAD BY NOW. AGREED. EVEN A PACK OF HYENAS WOULDN'T EAT THE PLAGUE DEAD.















BOTH
MEN ARE DEAD
NOW. KARAM IN
THE WAR. BANJEET
TOOK HIS OWN
LIFE.



LET'S
FINISH UP,
MR. KIDD.

WE
HAVE A
WAR TO
FIGHT.



YOU'RE
CORRECT,
DOCTOR--WE
DO HAVE A WAR
TO FIGHT. SO WHY
ARE WE WASTING
TIME ON EMPTY
GRAVES?



WE'LL DIG A HOLE
FOR **YOU**, JUDGE
RIGO. WHEN THE
TIME COMES.

THERE
WILL BE A
MARKER WITH YOUR
NAME ON IT, TO TELL
THE WORLD THAT YOU
WERE HERE AND THAT
THERE ARE THOSE
WHO REMEMBER
YOU.



I DON'T
WANT AN EMPTY
HOLE IN THE EARTH
TO BEAR MY NAME.



CHAPTER TWO



ODESSA.

CAREFUL.
DON'T DROP
HIM.

AT LEAST
MR. HODGE
HAS A
GRAVE.

CHILDRESS
AND CAPTAIN
AISCHRO'S HAVE
GRAVES, MR.
MARCHAND.

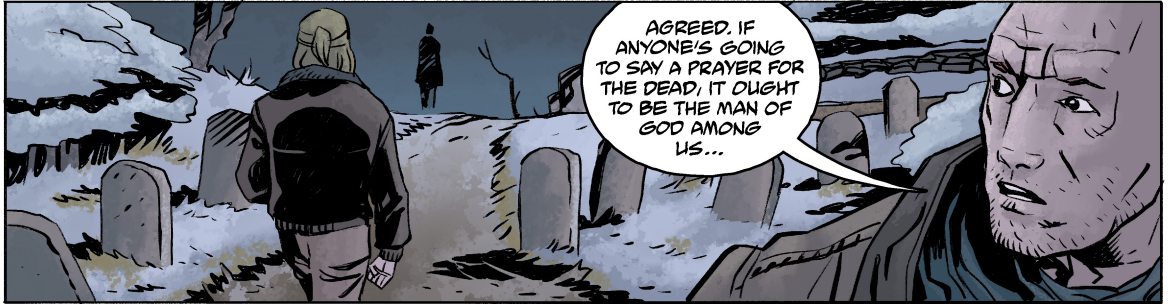
EVEN
IF ALL WE'RE
BURYING ARE
MEMORIES?

MEMORIES
ARE ALL WE EVER
BURY, DOCTOR. AS
A MEDICAL MAN, I'D
THINK YOU WOULD
KNOW THAT.

THAT'S
THE LAST
ONE.

I
WONDER
WHO'LL
CARVE MY
NAME.





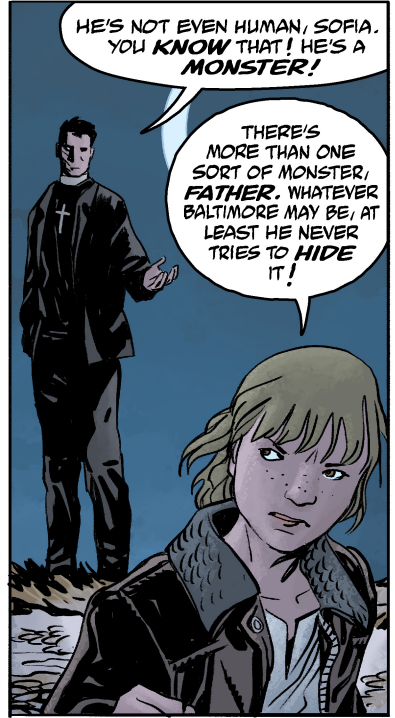




YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS. WITH ALL THAT WE'VE LOST--ALL THE WORLD STANDS TO LOSE--YOU WANT ME TO...



"...WHAT? RUN AWAY WITH YOU?"



HE'S NOT EVEN HUMAN, SOFIA. YOU **KNOW** THAT! HE'S A **MONSTER!**

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE SORT OF MONSTER, **FATHER**. WHATEVER BALTIMORE MAY BE, AT LEAST HE NEVER TRIES TO **HIDE** IT!

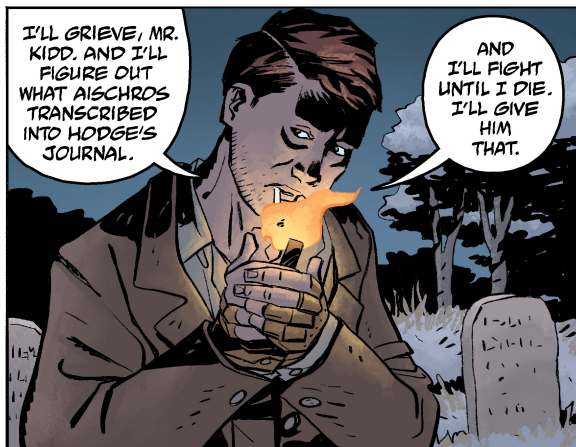


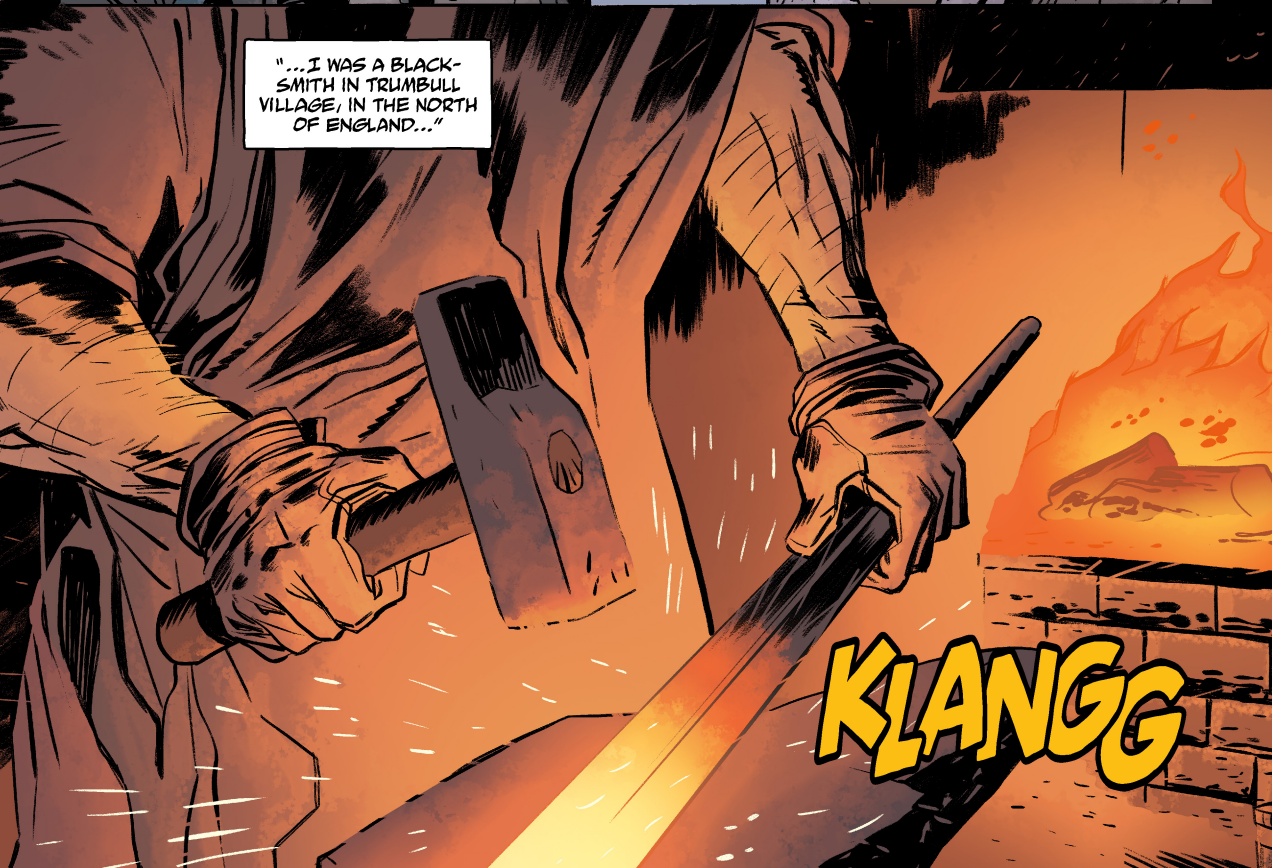
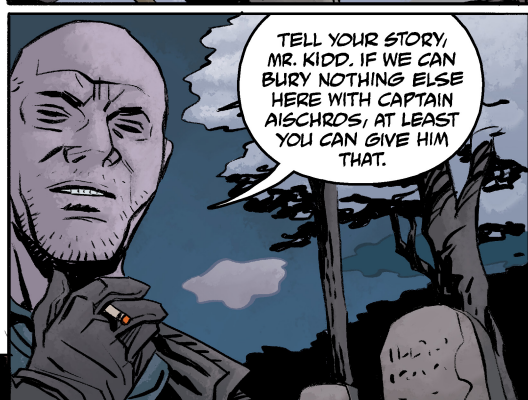
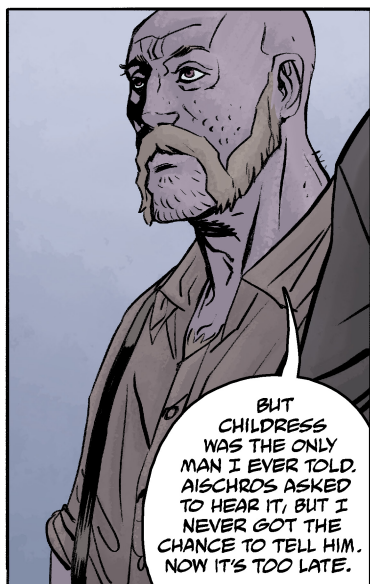
AND FOR AISCHROS? WHAT MEMENTO MIGHT WE BURY IN **HIS** GRAVE?

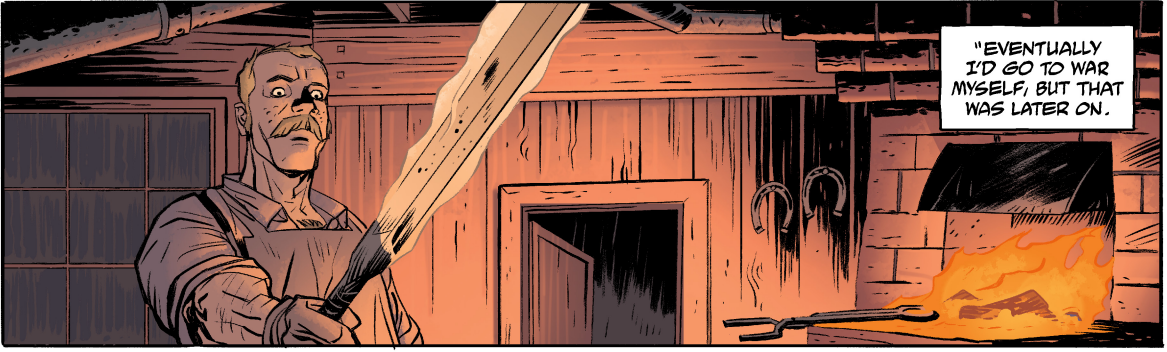
HE WAS A FRIEND TO ME WHEN I NEEDED ONE, WHEN I LEAST DESERVED ONE, BUT I'M AFRAID I HAVE NOTHING OF THE CAPTAIN'S.



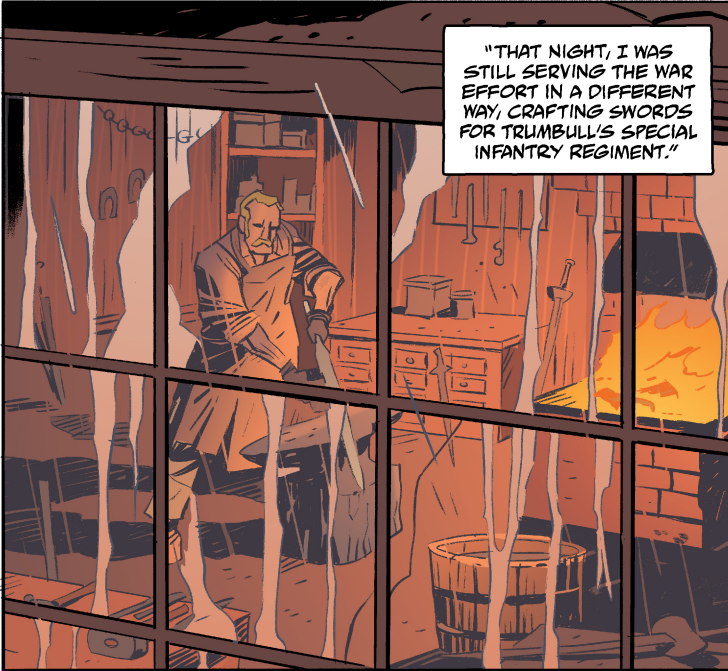
NOR DO I. THE MAN GAVE HIS LIFE FOR OURS AND WHAT DO WE GIVE HIM IN RETURN?



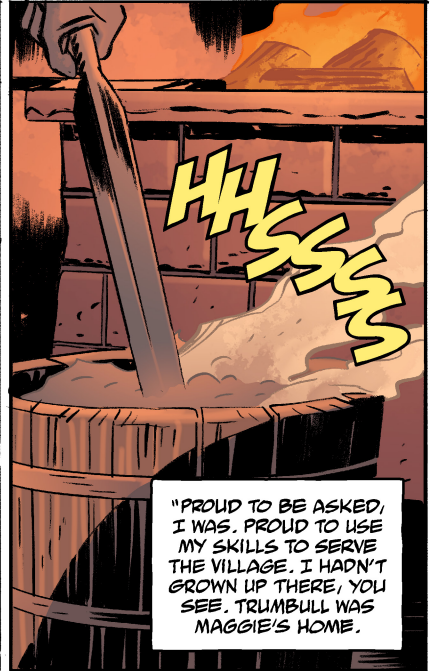




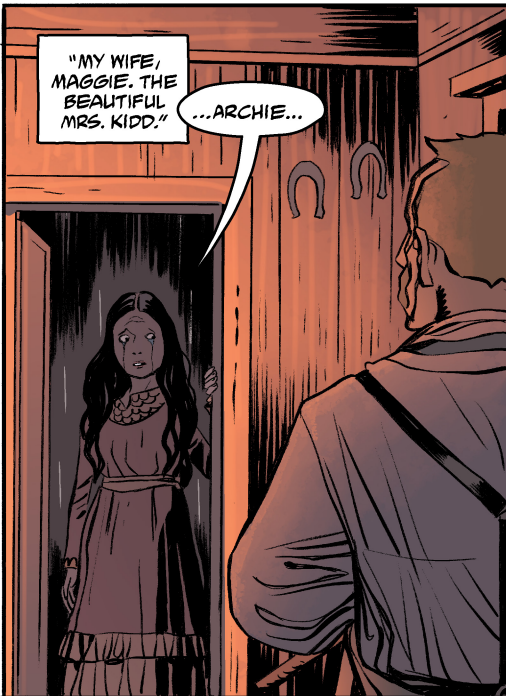
"EVENTUALLY
I'D GO TO WAR
MYSELF, BUT THAT
WAS LATER ON."



"THAT NIGHT, I WAS
STILL SERVING THE WAR
EFFORT IN A DIFFERENT
WAY, CRAFTING SWORDS
FOR TRUMBULL'S SPECIAL
INFANTRY REGIMENT."



"PROUD TO BE ASKED,
I WAS. PROUD TO USE
MY SKILLS TO SERVE
THE VILLAGE. I HADN'T
GROWN UP THERE, YOU
SEE. TRUMBULL WAS
MAGGIE'S HOME."



"MY WIFE,
MAGGIE. THE
BEAUTIFUL
MRS. KIDD."

...ARCHIE...



MAGGIE,
WHAT IS IT,
LOVE?



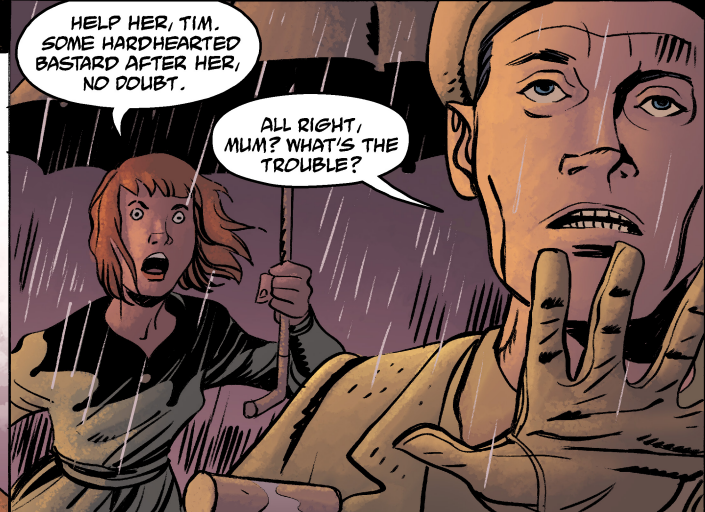






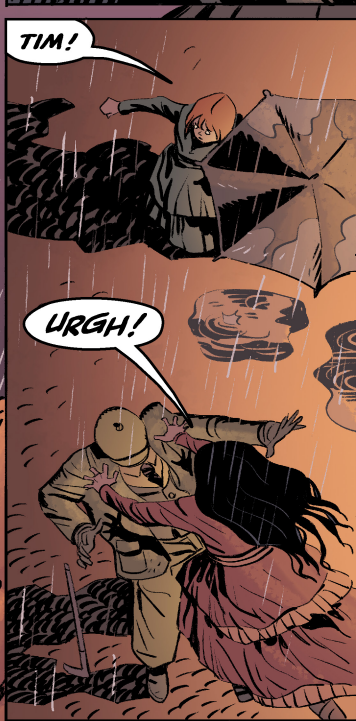
WHAT'S THIS, NOW?

Nooooo!



HELP HER, TIM. SOME HARDHEARTED BASTARD AFTER HER, NO DOUBT.

ALL RIGHT, MUM? WHAT'S THE TROUBLE?



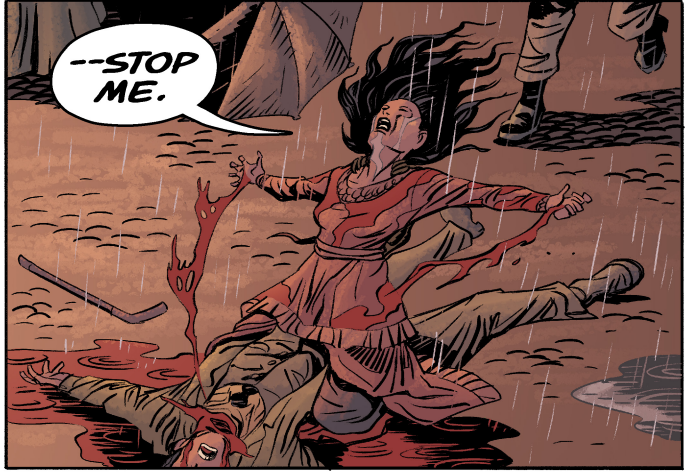
TIM!

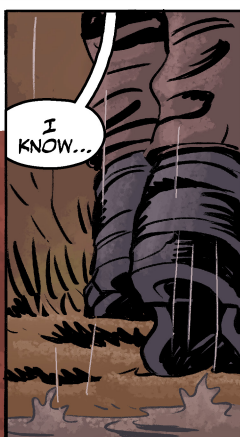
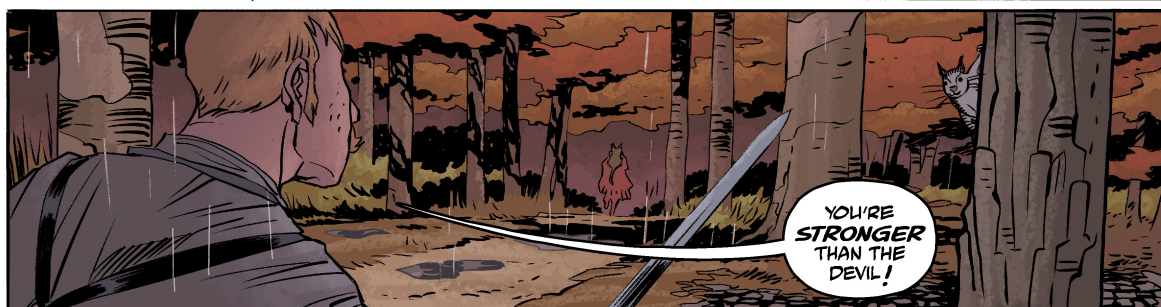
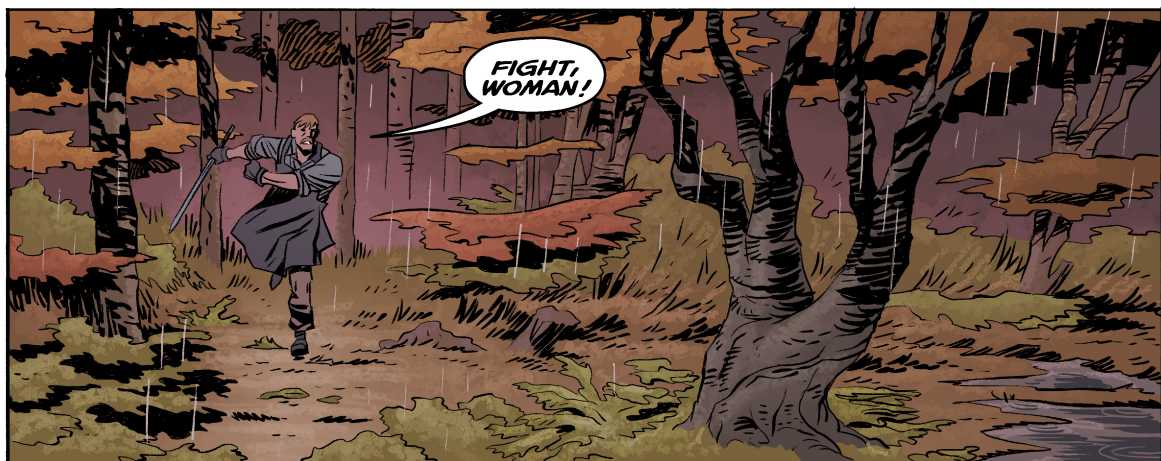
URGH!

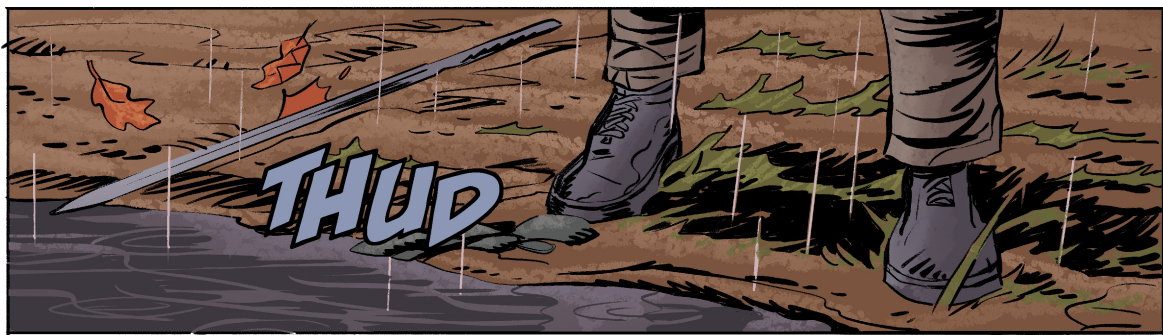


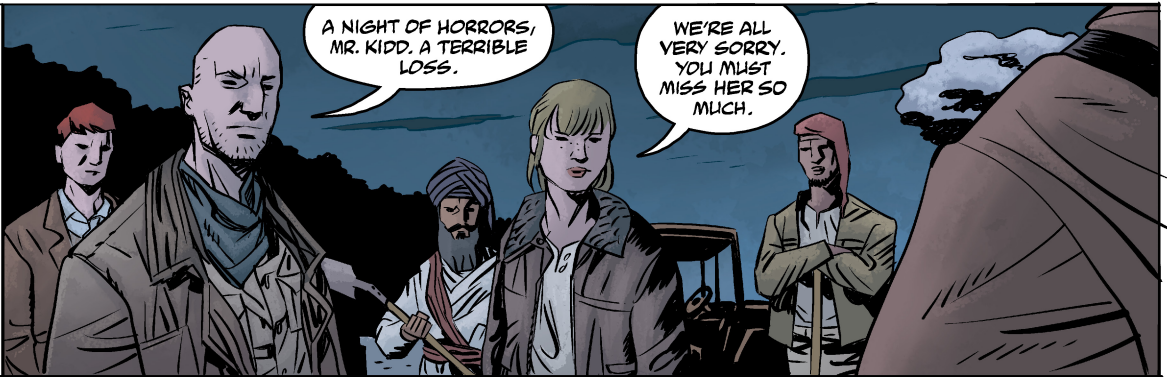
I CAN'T STOP-- IT WON'T LET ME STOP!

SHRIPT











I CONFESS I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF YOU AT FIRST, LORD BALTIMORE. BEFORE WE MET, MR. CHILDRESS HAD TOLD ME STORIES ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD TOGETHER...

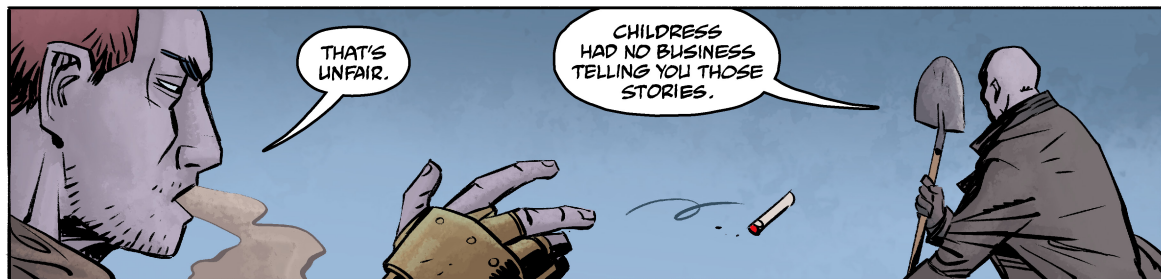
...WHAT YOU HAD BEEN LIKE AS A BOY.



CHILDRESS NEVER TOLD ME THOSE STORIES.



DON'T COMPETE WITH THE DEAD, DOCTOR. IT'S UNBECOMING.



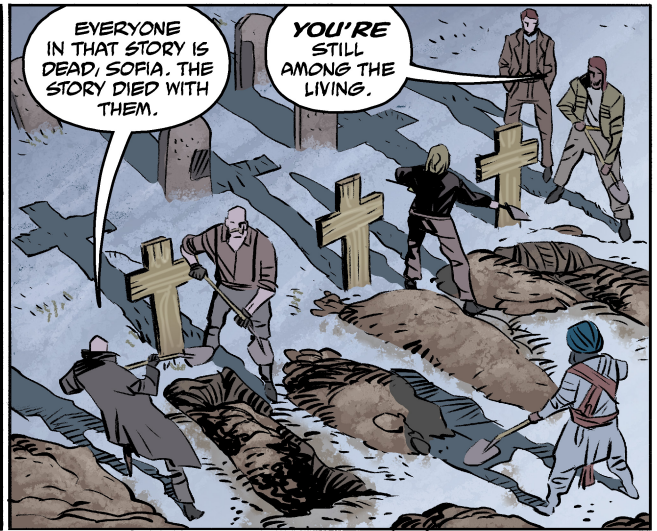
THAT'S UNFAIR.

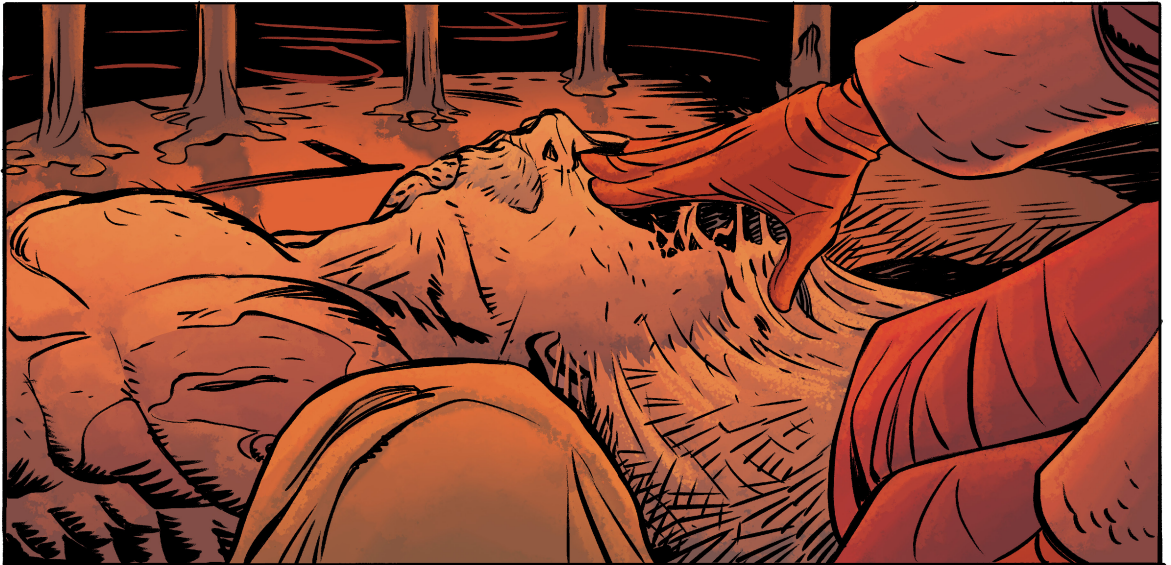
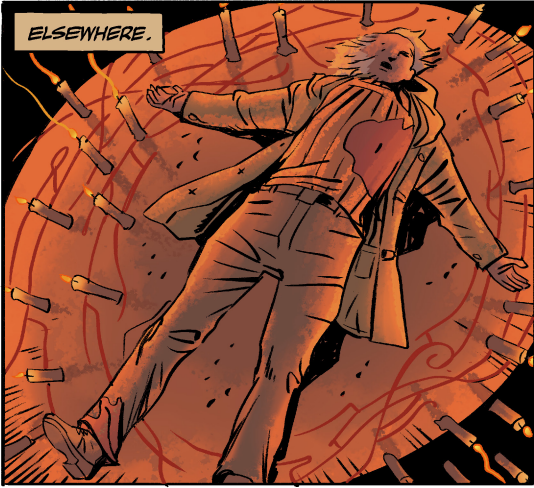
CHILDRESS HAD NO BUSINESS TELLING YOU THOSE STORIES.



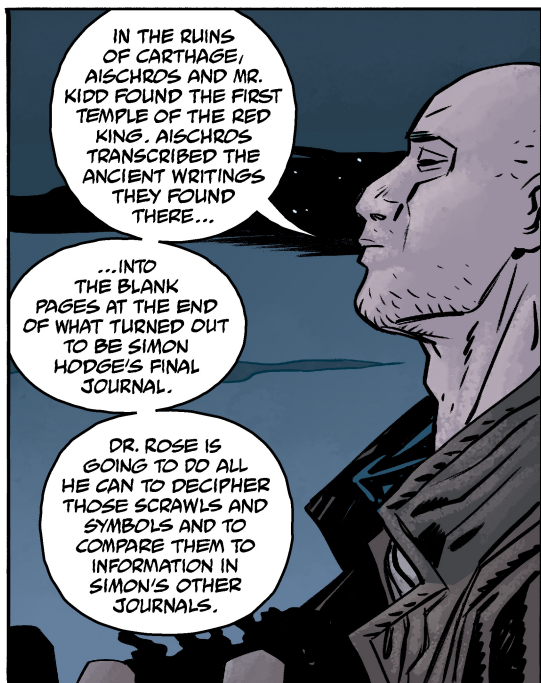
I'M NOT SORRY HE DID. THEY ALWAYS REMINDED ME THAT WE WEREN'T FIGHTING FOR OURSELVES BUT FOR THE CHILDREN WE ONCE WERE...

...AND FOR THE CHILDREN YET TO BE BORN.









IN THE RUINS OF CARTHAGE, AISCHROS AND MR. KIDD FOUND THE FIRST TEMPLE OF THE RED KING. AISCHROS TRANSCRIBED THE ANCIENT WRITINGS THEY FOUND THERE...

...INTO THE BLANK PAGES AT THE END OF WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE SIMON HODGE'S FINAL JOURNAL.

DR. ROSE IS GOING TO DO ALL HE CAN TO DECIPHER THOSE SCRAWLS AND SYMBOLS AND TO COMPARE THEM TO INFORMATION IN SIMON'S OTHER JOURNALS.



UNTIL THEN, OUR BEST HOPE IS TO FIND THE BLOOD-RED WITCH, WHO STOLE CHILDRESS'S REMAINS.

HER TRAIL LEADS TO CONSTANTINOPLE, AND I INTEND TO FOLLOW. BEFORE YOU DECIDE IF YOU WILL COME ALONG, THERE IS SOMETHING I MUST SAY.



I BELIEVED THAT WHEN I FINALLY TOOK VENGEANCE ON THE MONSTER THAT MURDERED MY FAMILY, I WOULD DIE WITH HIM.

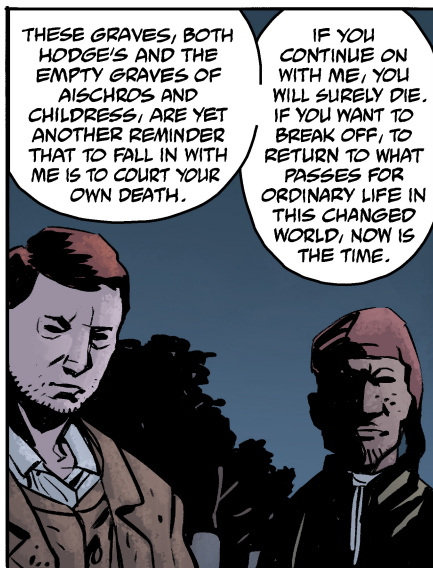
I DID NOT. IT SEEMS I CANNOT.

MY FONDEST WISH NOW IS THAT WHEN I DESTROY THE RED KING, I WILL FINALLY BE ALLOWED MY OWN DEATH.



TO LIVE BEYOND THAT WOULD BE THE ULTIMATE INJUSTICE. THE TRUE HELL.

I UNDERSTAND THAT NONE OF YOU FEELS AS I DO.

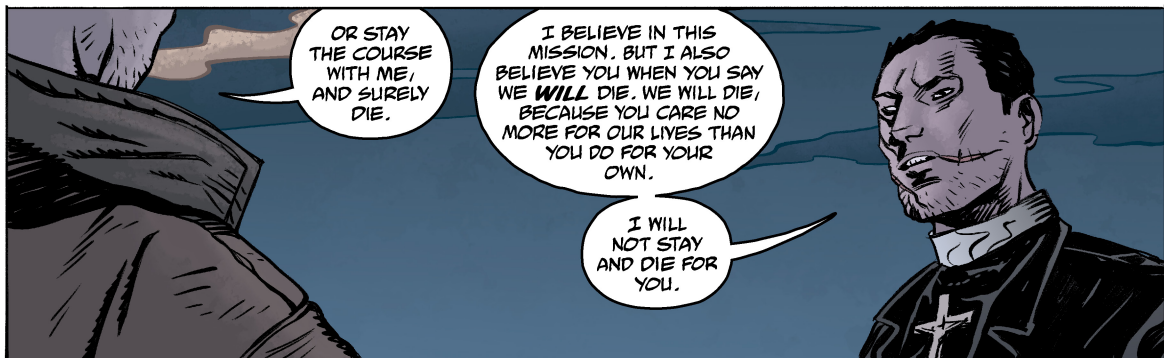


THESE GRAVES, BOTH HODGE'S AND THE EMPTY GRAVES OF AISCHROS AND CHILDRESS, ARE YET ANOTHER REMINDER THAT TO FALL IN WITH ME IS TO COURT YOUR OWN DEATH.

IF YOU CONTINUE ON WITH ME, YOU WILL SURELY DIE. IF YOU WANT TO BREAK OFF, TO RETURN TO WHAT PASSES FOR ORDINARY LIFE IN THIS CHANGED WORLD, NOW IS THE TIME.



GO AND LIVE...



OR STAY
THE COURSE
WITH ME,
AND SURELY
DIE.

I BELIEVE IN THIS
MISSION. BUT I ALSO
BELIEVE YOU WHEN YOU SAY
WE **WILL** DIE. WE WILL DIE,
BECAUSE YOU CARE NO
MORE FOR OUR LIVES THAN
YOU DO FOR YOUR
OWN.

I WILL
NOT STAY
AND DIE FOR
YOU.



COWARD! YOU RAN
WHEN THE WOLF
KILLED THE OTHER
INQUISITORS IN
THAT CASTLE, AND
YOU'RE RUNNING
AGAIN!

THE MEN WHOSE
GRAVES WE DUG...
THEY FACED THE
DARKNESS, RIGO.
THEY DIDN'T
RUN.



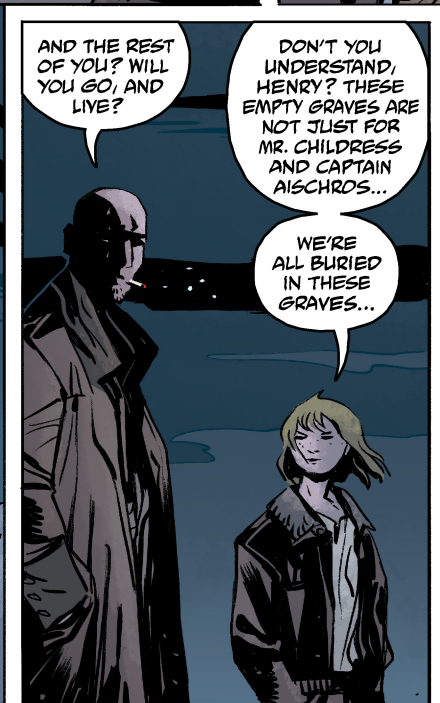
LORD BALTIMORE,
I JOINED YOUR
CRUSADE BECAUSE
YOU CONVINCED
ME I HAD BEEN
SERVING A CAUSE
FOUNDED ON
CRUELTY AND
EVIL.

I WATCHED
YOU TORTURE
THAT DYING WITCH
IN ST. PETERSBURG
AND REALIZED I COULD
NO LONGER TELL THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
YOU AND THE
INQUISITION.



LOOK AT
YOURSELVES.
LOOK AT
HIM.

IF
WE MUST
ALL BECOME
MONSTERS TO
STOP THE RED KING
FROM COMING, THEN
HE HAS ALREADY
DESTROYED
US.



AND THE REST
OF YOU? WILL
YOU GO, AND
LIVE?

DON'T YOU
UNDERSTAND,
HENRY? THESE
EMPTY GRAVES ARE
NOT JUST FOR
MR. CHILDRESS
AND CAPTAIN
AISCHROS...

WE'RE
ALL BURIED
IN THESE
GRAVES...

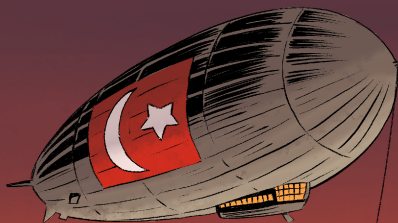


...AS
FAR AS WE'RE
CONCERNED,
WE'RE ALREADY
DEAD.

CHAPTER THREE



CONSTANTINOPLE.



JULY 15,
1920.

<...BUT
PROFESSOR,
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY
BELIEVE THE EMPIRE
WAS BETTER OFF
WHEN THE SULTAN HAD
COMPLETE CONTROL.
PARLIAMENT GIVES
THE PEOPLE A
VOICE-->

<AND LOOK WHERE
IT HAS GOTTEN US.
BLOODSHED AND TERROR.
GO HOME NOW, CEMAL.
IT'S AFTER DARK. WE WILL
CONTINUE THIS DEBATE
TOMORROW.>

<YES,
PROFESSOR.>

<TRANSLATED FROM THE OTTOMAN TURKISH>





THIS IS EXTRAORDINARY. YOU TRULY BELIEVE THESE WRITINGS COME FROM THE FIRST TEMPLE OF THE RED KING? YOU'VE **FOUND** IT?

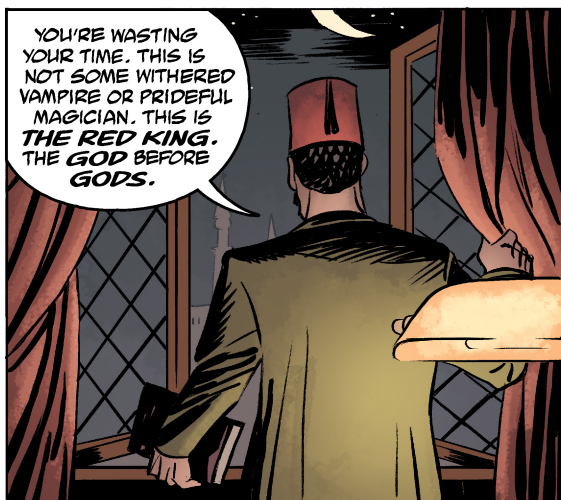
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKIN', PROFESSOR, BUT STOP THINKIN' IT. GOOD MEN DIED TO GET THAT JOURNAL OUT OF CARTHAGE. ONLY DEATH WAITS THERE NOW. YOU DON'T WANT TO GO.



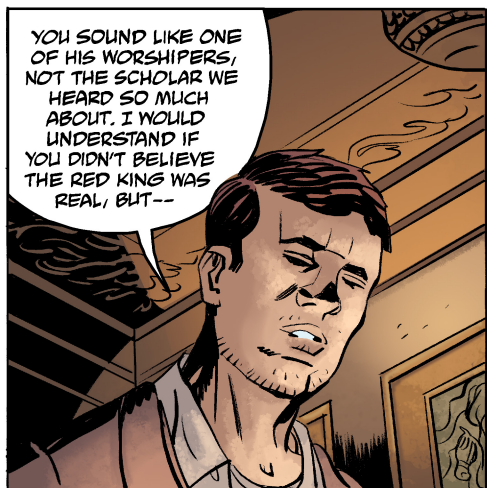
"...GOD BEFORE GODS, HE THRUST HIS HANDS INTO THE MAELSTROM AND FROM ITS SHADOWS HE SCULPTED THE MONSTERS OF THE FIRST NIGHT OF THE WORLD, AND EVERY NIGHT..."



WE WANT SOME IDEA HOW TO DESTROY HIM. OR AT LEAST KEEP HIM FROM RETURNING TO THIS WORLD.



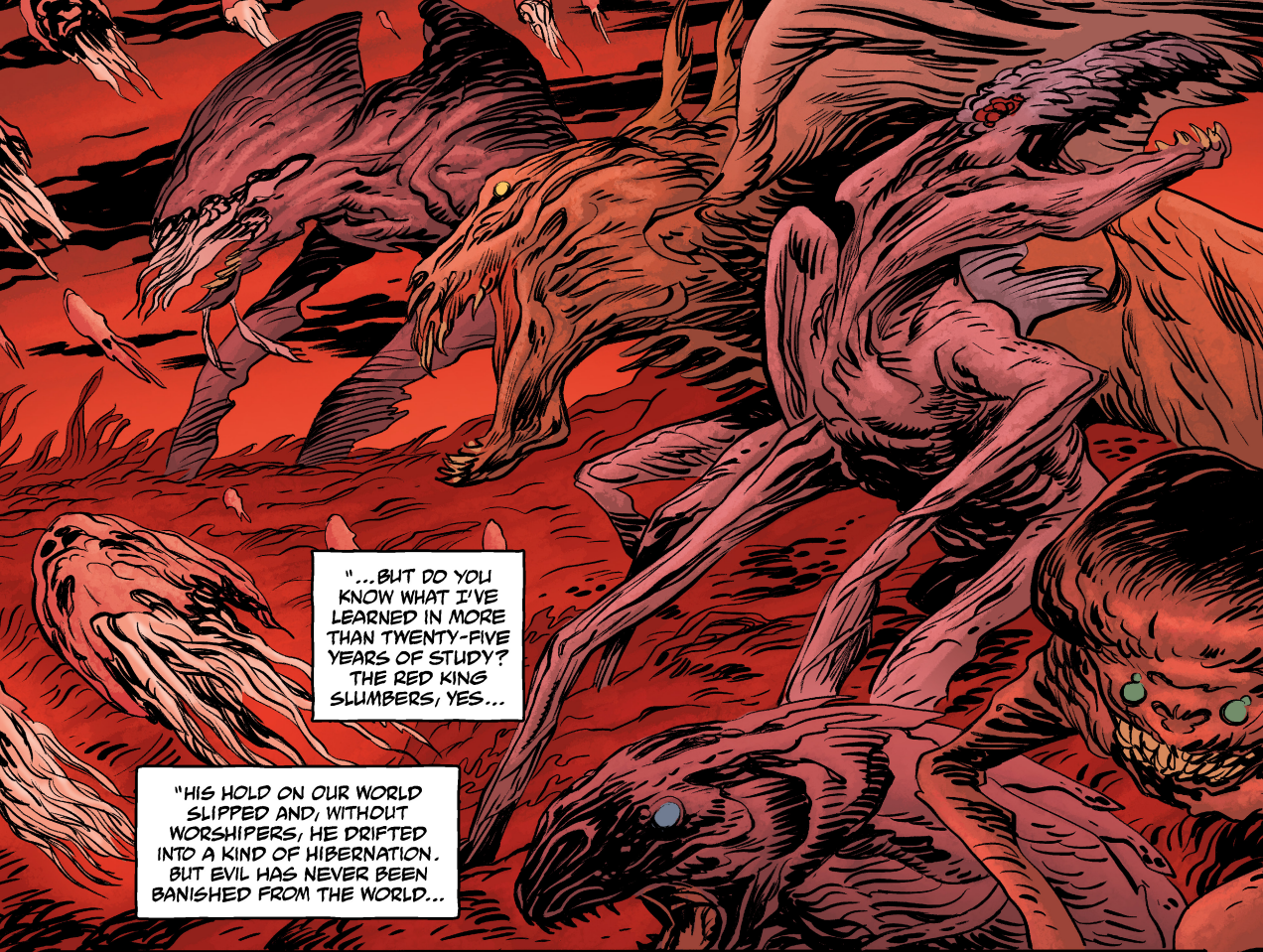
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME. THIS IS NOT SOME WITHERED VAMPIRE OR PRIDEFUL MAGICIAN. THIS IS **THE RED KING. THE GOD BEFORE GODS.**



YOU SOUND LIKE ONE OF HIS WORSHIPERS, NOT THE SCHOLAR WE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT. I WOULD UNDERSTAND IF YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE THE RED KING WAS REAL, BUT--



BUT THAT'S THE TROUBLE, ISN'T IT? I BELIEVE IN HIM COMPLETELY...



"...BUT DO YOU
KNOW WHAT I'VE
LEARNED IN MORE
THAN TWENTY-FIVE
YEARS OF STUDY?
THE RED KING
SLUMBERS, YES...

"HIS HOLD ON OUR WORLD
SLIPPED AND, WITHOUT
WORSHIPERS, HE DRIFTED
INTO A KIND OF HIBERNATION.
BUT EVIL HAS NEVER BEEN
BANISHED FROM THE WORLD...

"...THERE HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN MONSTERS.

"HIS INFLUENCE WAXES AND
WANES, BUT HE'S NEVER BEEN
UNAWARE. NEVER **REALLY**
BEEN ASLEEP. ONLY RESTING...

"...ONLY **WAITING**."



"I'LL TRANSLATE
AS MUCH OF THIS AS I
CAN, GENTLEMEN, BUT I CAN
ALREADY TELL YOU THERE ARE
THINGS HERE I HAVE NEVER
COME ACROSS IN MY OWN
RESEARCH. THIS, FOR
INSTANCE--

"THE FATHER
OF MONSTERS WILL
RETURN WHEN THE
DOOR STANDS OPEN. THE
HOUSE OF THE RED KING
IS THE COLD HEART
OF MAN."



HOW DOES
THAT HELP US?
IT SOUNDS LIKE
THE GIBBERISH OF
A DOZEN SATANIC
MYTHS ALL TOSSED
INTO THE SAME
STEW.

I
DON'T KNOW,
MR. KIDD...









OH.



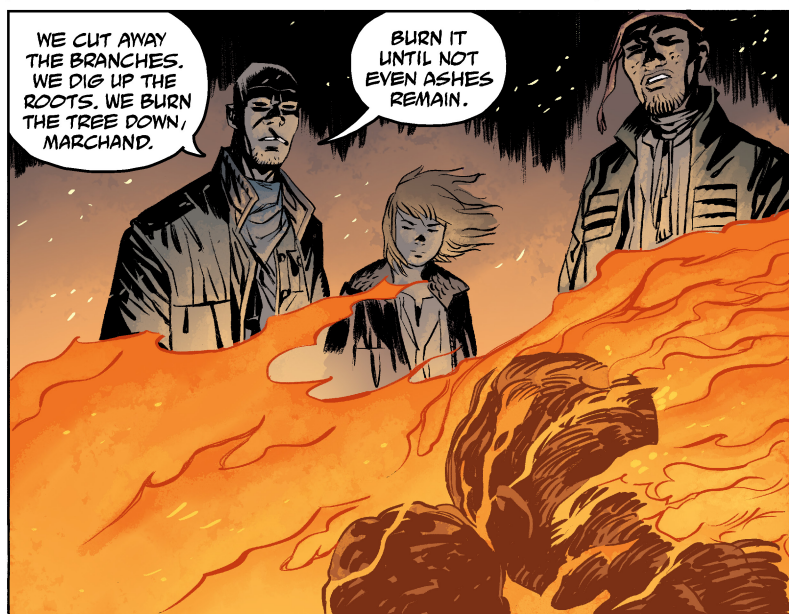
NOM D'UN
CHIEN!



NO MORE! WE
KEEP FIGHTING
AND THE WORLD
ONLY GROWS
DARKER.



WHAT GODD DOES IT DO IF
WE FIND THE BLOOD-RED
WITCH? WE CUT AWAY THE
BRANCHES, BUT THE TREE
IS FED FROM THE
ROOTS!



WE CUT AWAY
THE BRANCHES.
WE DIG UP THE
ROOTS. WE BURN
THE TREE DOWN,
MARCHAND.

BURN IT
UNTIL NOT
EVEN ASHES
REMAIN.



"...AND IT BEGINS WITH THE BLOOD-RED WITCH."

HENRY, PLEASE... THERE MUST BE A BETTER WAY--



PRINCESS RUKIYE HAS NOT BEEN SEEN IN PUBLIC IN MONTHS.

BECAUSE THE OTTOMANS AND TURKS ARE AT WAR FOR THE SOUL OF THIS CITY. FOR THE WHOLE **EMPIRE!** IT ISN'T SAFE! WE JUST WATCHED HER HALF BROTHER DIE!



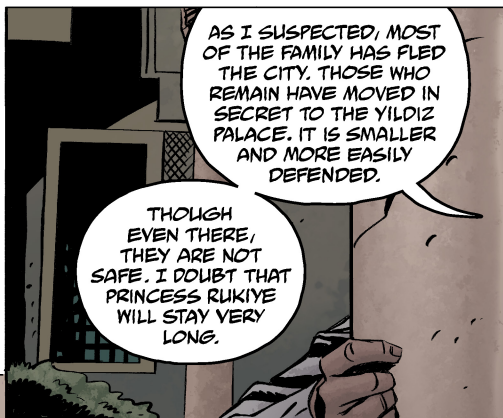
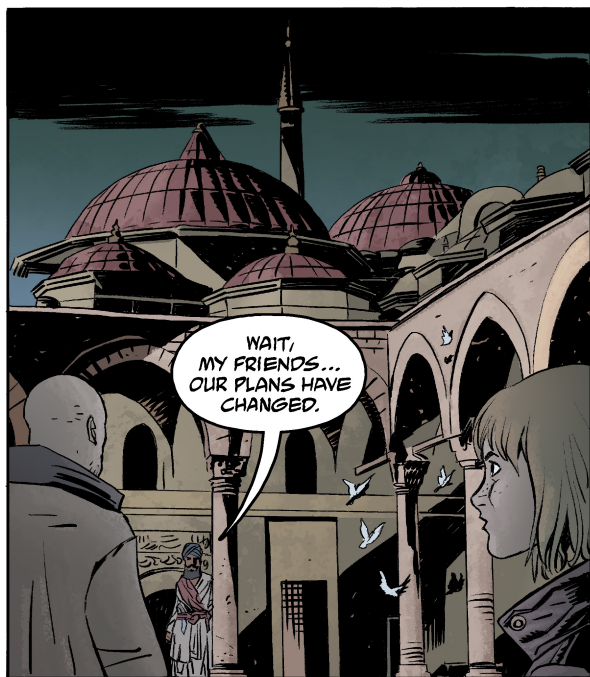
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN, SOFIA...



"...HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT THAT WITCH SAID IN ST. PETERSBURG?"



IF YOU WANT TO FIND THE BLOOD-RED WITCH, YOU MUST BEGIN IN CONSTANTINOPLE... WITH HER MOTHER... THE PRINCESS RUKIYE...









PRETEND
AS LONG AS
YOU LIKE. BUT I
SEE THE DARK
LIGHT IN YOUR EYES.
YOU ARE NOT AS YOU
PRETEND TO BE.



YOU HAVE
NO IDEA
WHAT
I AM!



DAMN IT.
SHE **IS** A
WITCH!



ALL
WE WANT ARE
ANSWERS!
NOBODY HAS
TO DIE!



WRONG.

EVERYBODY
HAS TO DIE!





I SAID
THAT EVERY
BODY MUST
DIE...

KRAK



...BUT FOR
THOSE WITH THE
KNOWLEDGE
AND THE **POWER**,
THERE ARE **OTHER**
BODIES TO BE
HAD!

KRAASH



TELL ME!
IS THE BLOOD-
RED WITCH YOUR
DAUGHTER?

MY DARLING
GIRL. THE
HEART OF MY
HEART.

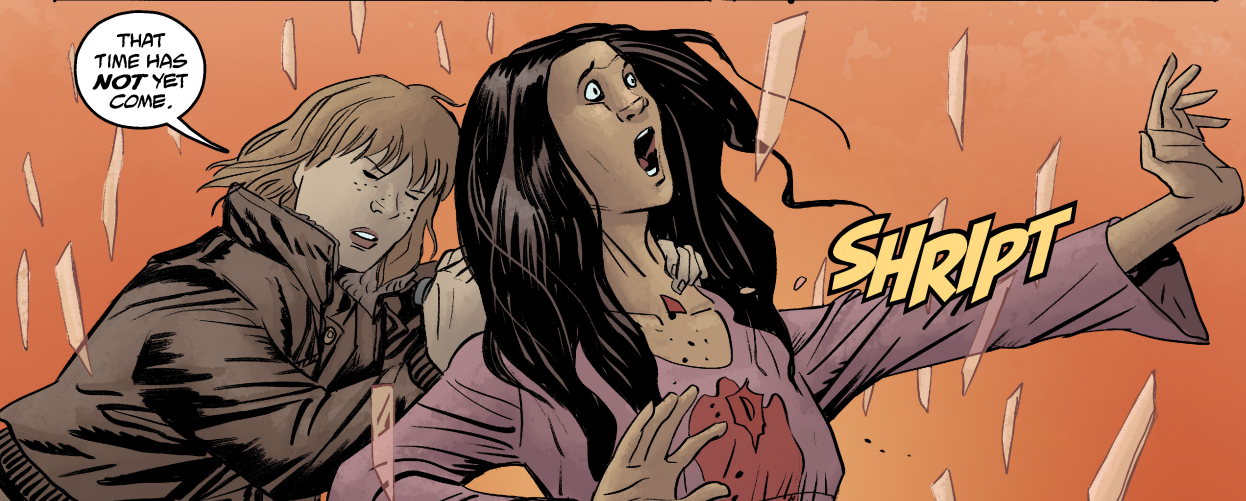
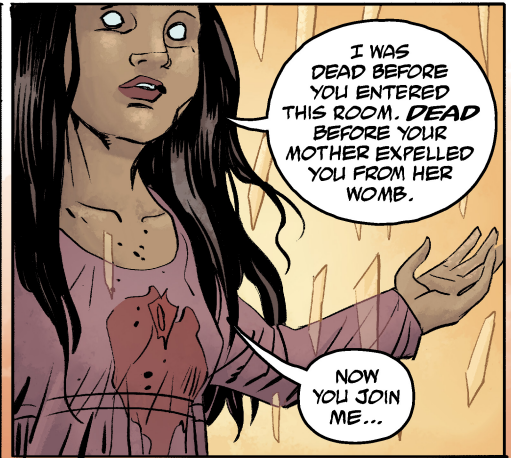
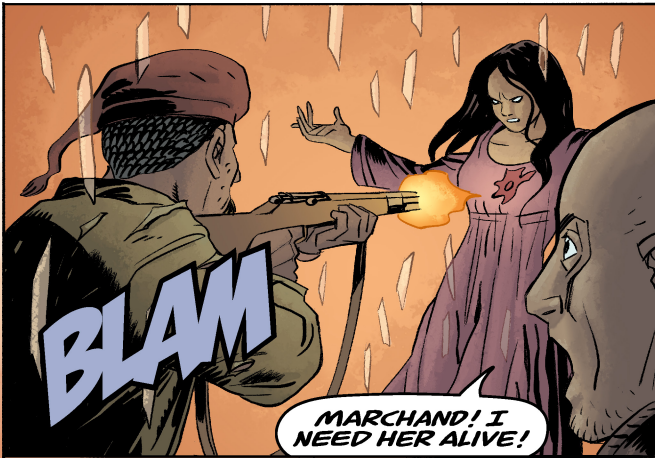
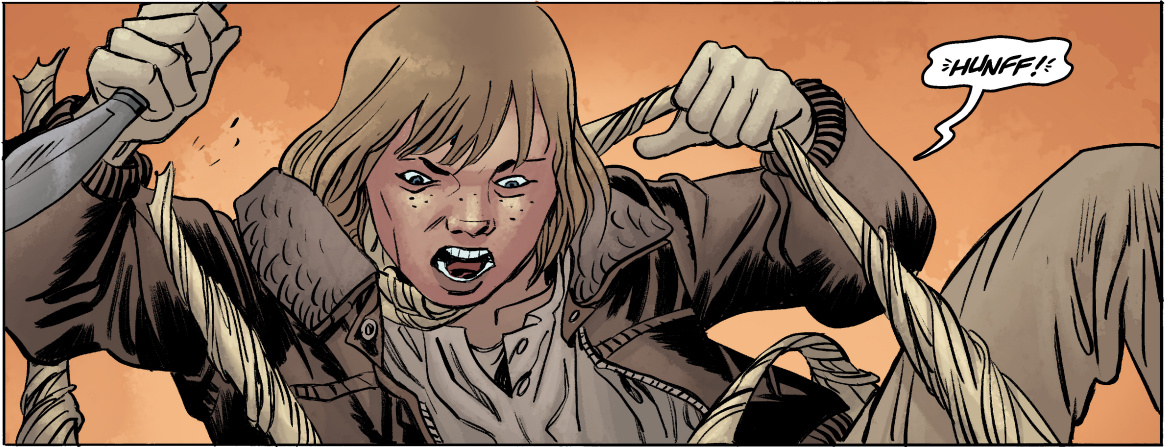


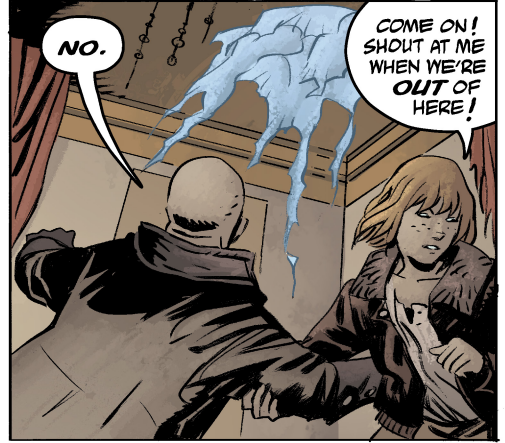
TELL US
WHERE SHE IS,
OR **YOU'LL DIE**,
LIKE THE **OTHERS**
WHO FOLLOW
HER!

YOU STILL
DON'T UNDER-
STAND? I'VE BEEN
DEAD MORE THAN
ONCE, AND HERE I
AM. NOT RUKIYE, BUT
HELENA VON HAHN...
FOREVER AND ALWAYS.



WHO?









THE
"TOMB OF THE
SULTAN."

MY THOUGHTS,
PRECISELY. IF THESE
ANCIENT MASTERS SHE
REFERS TO ARE GOING
TO RISE FROM THE DEAD IN THE BODIES
OF THE SULTANS--

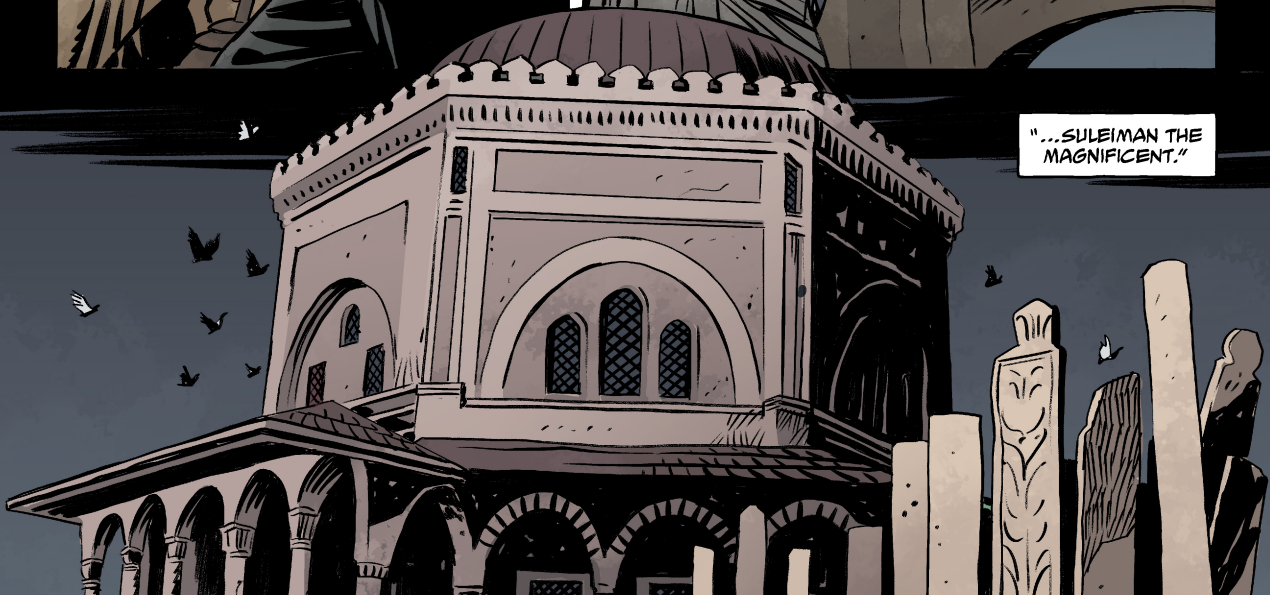


ARE YOU
SUGGESTING
WE BREAK INTO THE
IMPERIAL MOSQUE
NEXT?

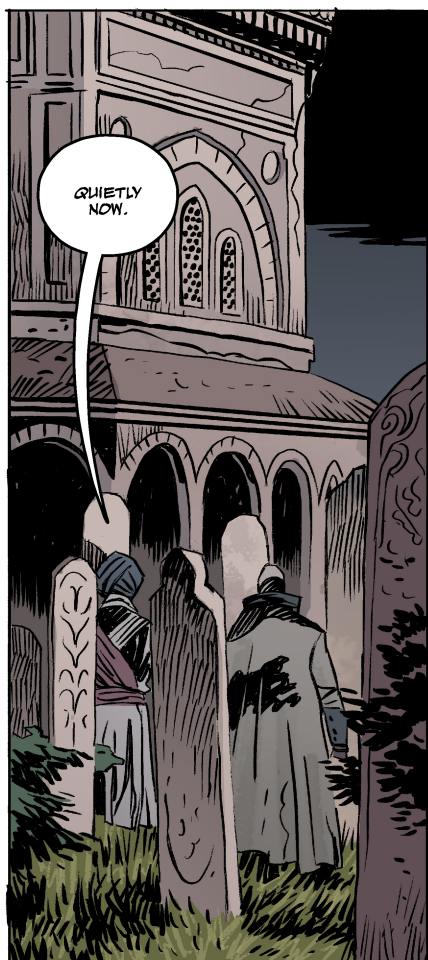
MANY OF
THE EMPIRE'S
MOST FAMOUS
MONARCHS
ARE BURIED
THERE... BUT SHE
SPOKE OF **ONE**
SULTAN. ONE
TOMB.



INDULGE ME. IF
THERE ARE SECRETS
UNFOLDING IN THE
TOMB OF A SULTAN, WE
SHOULD BEGIN WITH
THE EMPIRE'S
GREATEST...



"...SULEIMAN THE
MAGNIFICENT."

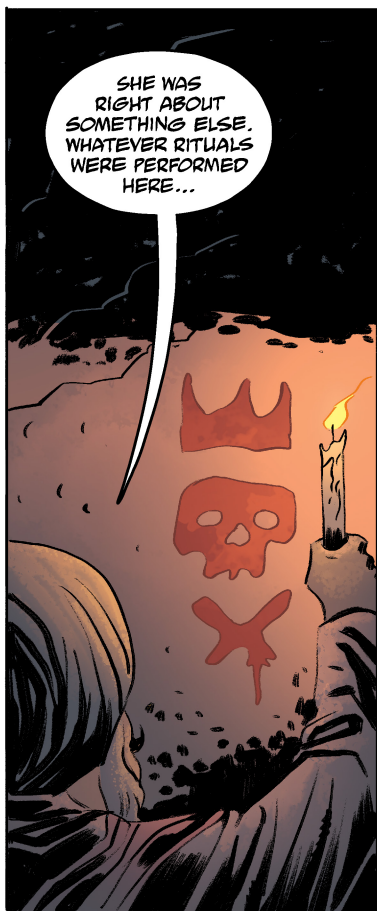




I SUPPOSE
WE WILL.



SOMETHING
BROKE **OUT**
OF THESE TOMBS,
NOT IN. JUST AS
THE PRINCESS
SAID.



SHE WAS
RIGHT ABOUT
SOMETHING ELSE.
WHATEVER RITUALS
WERE PERFORMED
HERE...



...THEY
WERE DONE
IN WORSHIP
OF THE RED
KING.



CHAPTER FOUR

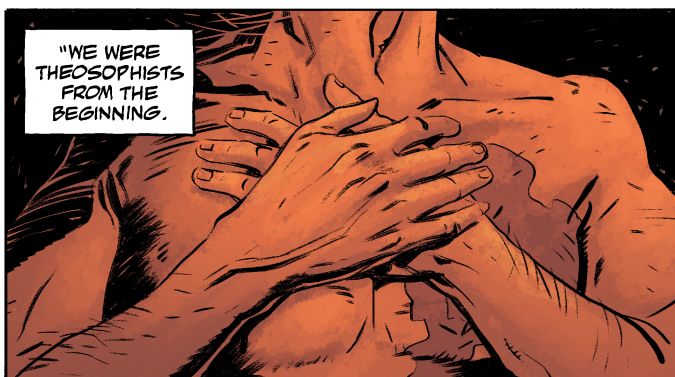




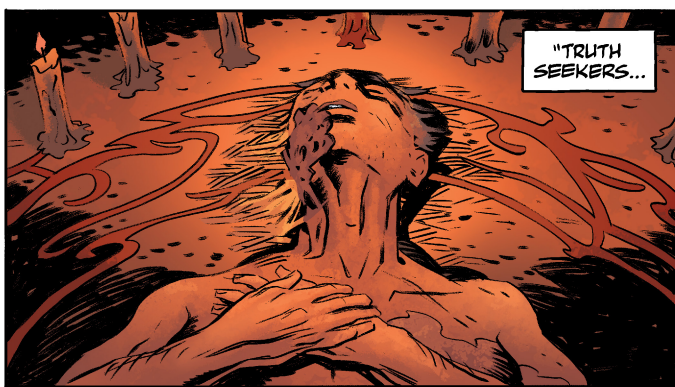
"TO BEGIN WITH, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT WE NEVER CALLED OURSELVES THE MASTERS OF THE ANCIENT WISDOM.



"OTHERS GAVE US THAT NAME.



"WE WERE THEOSOPHISTS FROM THE BEGINNING.



"TRUTH SEEKERS...



"WE SOUGHT TO UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE...

"...NO SMALL TASK, I ASSURE YOU...



"WE SEARCHED FOR THE
THREADS THAT BOUND
HUMANITY TO DIVINITY..."



...EARTH
TO THE
COSMOS...



...AND
WE FOUND
THEM.



WE BECAME THE
ELDER BROTHERS
OF THE HUMAN RACE.
SOME ACCUSED US OF
SORCERY, BUT WE
WERE NEVER
MAGICIANS.

WE
WERE
MERELY
WISE.



IT MAY
ASTONISH
YOU TO HEAR
IT, BUT I
DON'T CARE
WHAT YOU
ARE.



BUT YOU SHOULD.

FOR WE HAVE UNDERGONE A NEW EVOLUTION.



I AM CALLED TABRIZI. MY BROTHERS ARE MORYA AND KLUTHUMI. WE WEAR THE BODIES OF SULEIMAN AND HIS SONS NOW, BUT ONCE WE WERE MORE THAN THIS.

ONCE WE WERE ADEPTS--THE MASTERS OF THE WEST--AND OUR NAMES WERE LEGEND. NOW WE MERELY SERVE.



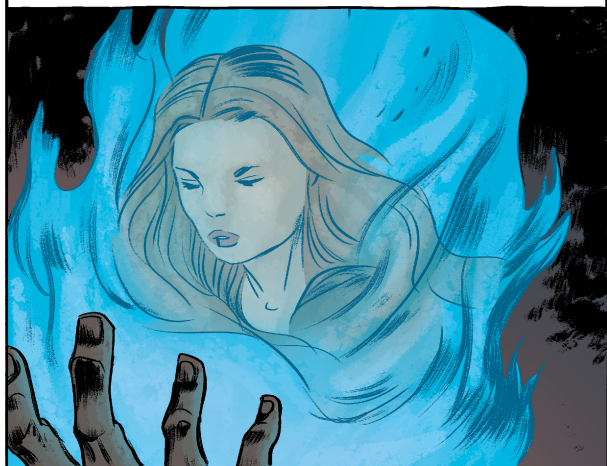
MORYA, YES...THAT WAS MY NAME, ONCE UPON A TIME. I HAVE BORNE SO MANY.

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU CALL YOURSELF. TELL ME ABOUT HELENA VON HAHN AND THE BLOOD-RED WITCH.



GLADLY. PROUDLY...

"SHE WAS BORN IN THE SUMMER OF 1831, GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER OF A RUSSIAN PRINCE WHO'D COUNTED CAGLIOSTRO AND SAINT-GERMAIN AMONG HIS FRIENDS...



"...DISSATISFIED WITH THE REALITY PRESENTED TO HER, SHE HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO SEEK THE TRUTH, TO UNRAVEL THE THREADS OF THE WORLD...



"THOSE WITH RESTLESS MINDS ARE FOREVER MISUNDERSTOOD..."

(YOUR DAUGHTER IS BECOMING TROUBLESOME, PYOTR. SHE TELLS ME SHE WILL ESCAPE, AS IF I HOLD HER PRISONER.)

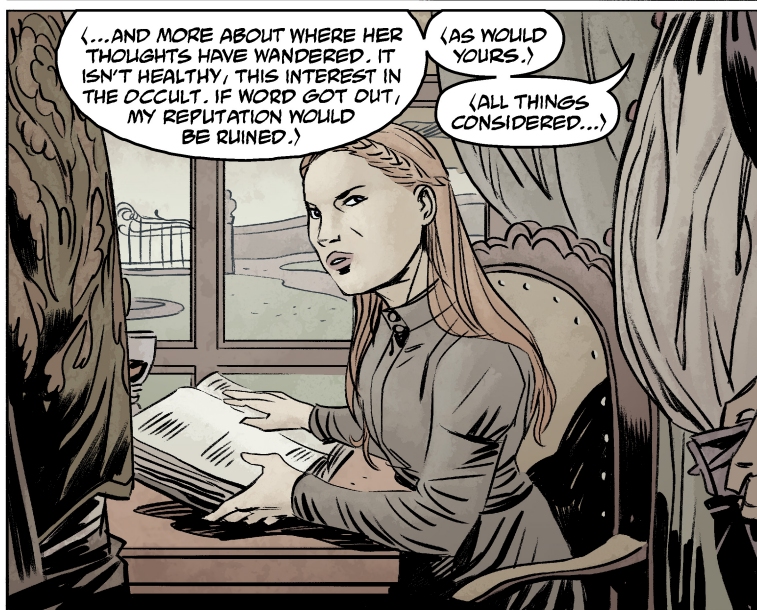


(I WOULD WORRY LESS ABOUT HER FLEEING YOUR MARRIAGE, MY FRIEND...)

(...AND MORE ABOUT WHERE HER THOUGHTS HAVE WANDERED. IT ISN'T HEALTHY, THIS INTEREST IN THE OCCULT. IF WORD GOT OUT, MY REPUTATION WOULD BE RUINED.)

(AS WOULD YOURS.)

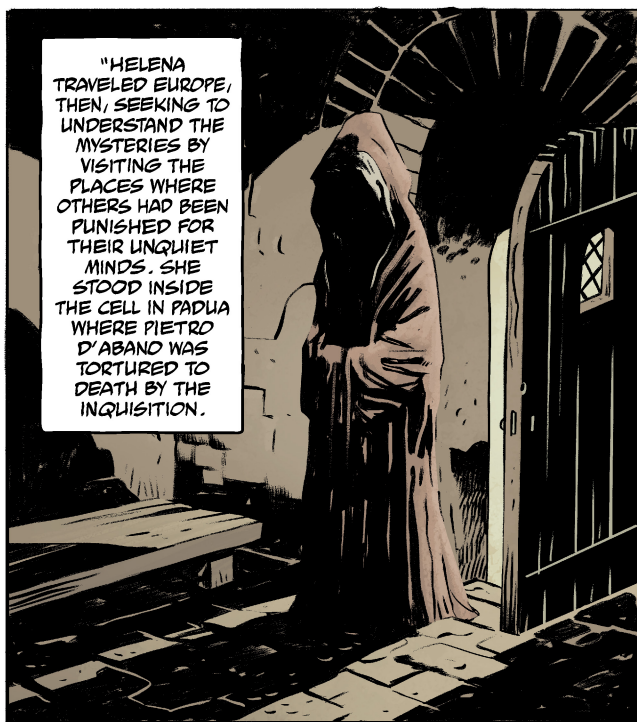
(ALL THINGS CONSIDERED...)



"(...IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF SHE ESCAPED US BOTH.)"



(TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN)



"HELENA TRAVELED EUROPE, THEN, SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERIES BY VISITING THE PLACES WHERE OTHERS HAD BEEN PUNISHED FOR THEIR UNQUIET MINDS. SHE STOOD INSIDE THE CELL IN PADUA WHERE PIETRO D'ABANO WAS TORTURED TO DEATH BY THE INQUISITION.



"SHE STOOD IN THE RAIN IN THE SQUARE IN NANTES, WHERE THEY HANGED GILLES DE RAIS, AND TRIED TO SEE THE FRAYING EDGES OF THE CURTAIN OF THE WORLD.



"SHE STUDIED THE BOOKS IN THE FORBIDDEN LIBRARY IN CAIRO, THE FIRST WOMAN TO BE ALLOWED WITHIN ITS WALLS IN TWO CENTURIES...



"AND THEN, AT LAST, HELENA CAME TO US...

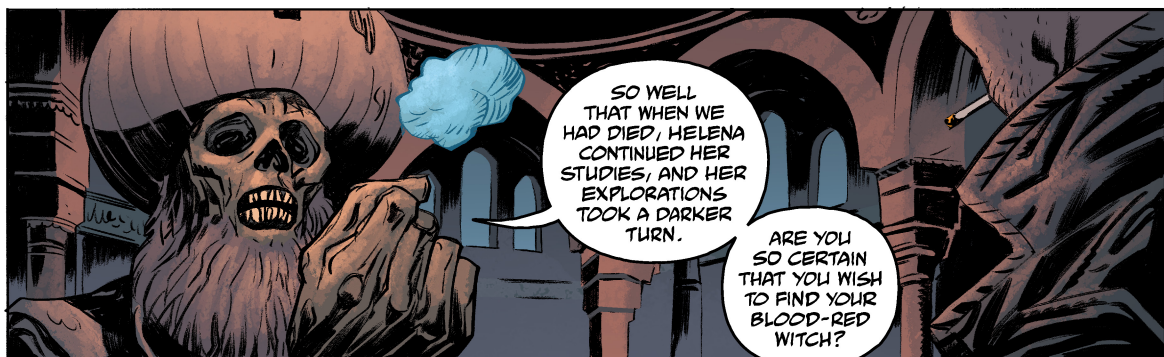
"I HAD VISITED HER DREAMS FOR MANY YEARS BY THEN. I GUIDED HER FIRST TO CONSTANTINOPLE, AND THEN AT LAST TO TIBET...



"...WHERE WE OFFERED HER THE ANSWERS SHE HAD SOUGHT FOR SO LONG. THE WISDOM..."



WE
TAUGHT
HER
WELL.



SO WELL
THAT WHEN WE
HAD DIED, HELENA
CONTINUED HER
STUDIES, AND HER
EXPLORATIONS
TOOK A DARKER
TURN.

ARE YOU
SO CERTAIN
THAT YOU WISH
TO FIND YOUR
BLOOD-RED
WITCH?



I WILL
FIND HER.
AND I
WILL KILL
HER.



I HAVE
NO DOUBT
THAT *SHE*
WILL FIND *YOU*.
KILLING HER,
HOWEVER...

THAT
MAY PROVE...
DIFFICULT.



HERE IT IS AGAIN...



"THE HOUSE OF THE RED KING WILL BE BUILT BY THE MOTHER OF MONSTERS."

IT MAKES NO SENSE. LEGENDS FREQUENTLY REFER TO THE RED KING AS THE FATHER OF ALL MONSTERS. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE RUN ACROSS ANYTHING ABOUT A "MOTHER."



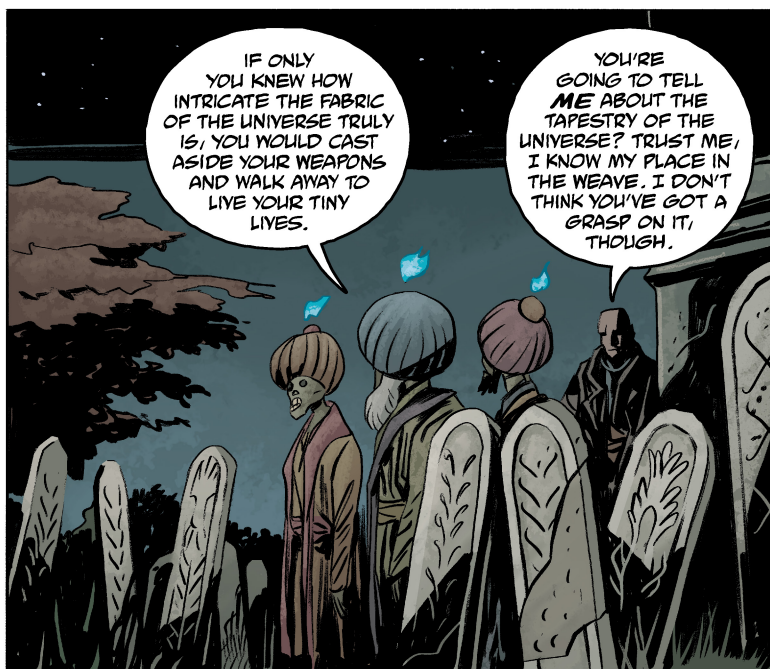
MAYBE IT'S HER. THE BLOOD-RED WITCH.



SHE CAN'T POSSIBLY BE THAT POWERFUL.



CAN SHE?



IF ONLY
YOU KNEW HOW
INTRICATE THE FABRIC
OF THE UNIVERSE TRULY
IS, YOU WOULD CAST
ASIDE YOUR WEAPONS
AND WALK AWAY TO
LIVE YOUR TINY
LIVES.

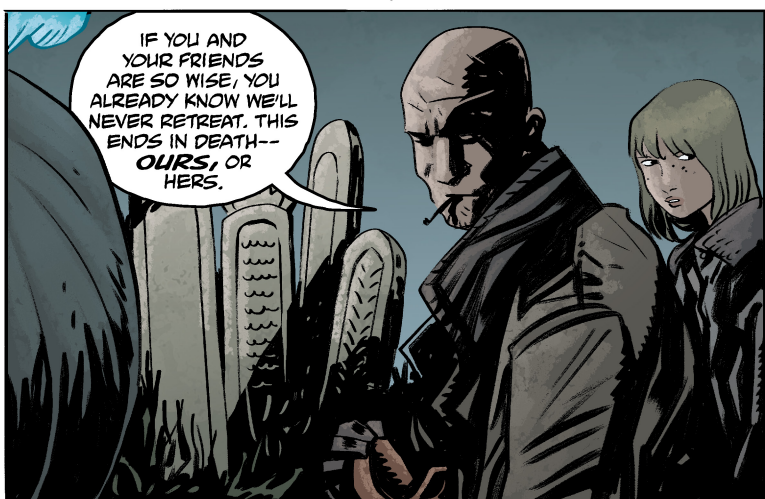
YOU'RE
GOING TO TELL
ME ABOUT THE
TAPESTRY OF THE
UNIVERSE? TRUST ME,
I KNOW MY PLACE IN
THE WEAVE. I DON'T
THINK YOU'VE GOT A
GRASP ON IT,
THOUGH.



YOU
ARE AN ERRANT
THREAD. NOTHING
MORE.



GO. IT'S NOT TOO
LATE. YOU HAVE LIFE
YET TO LIVE BEFORE
HE COMES TO
UNRAVEL IT
ALL.

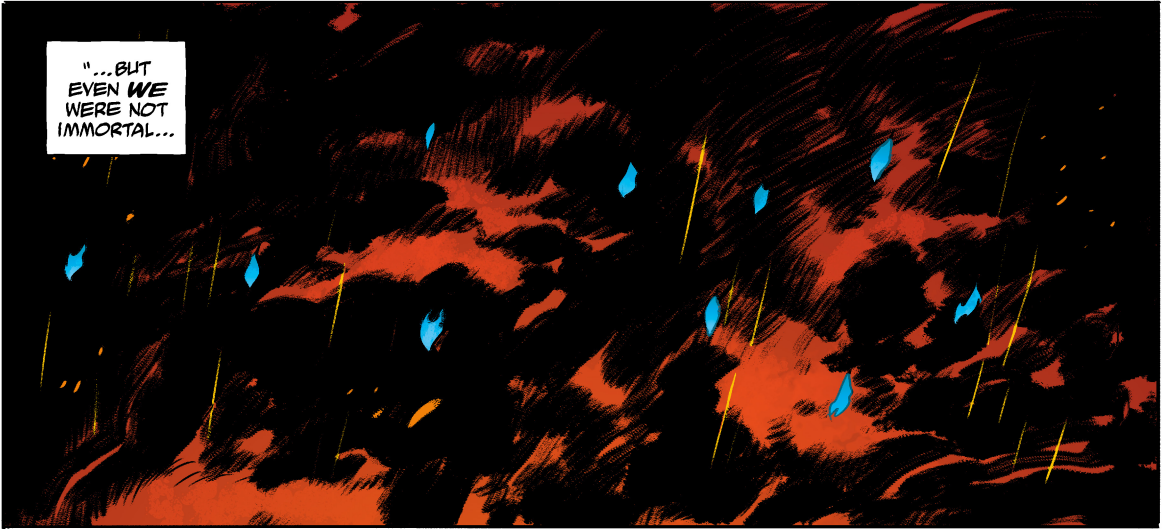


IF YOU AND
YOUR FRIENDS
ARE SO WISE, YOU
ALREADY KNOW WE'LL
NEVER RETREAT. THIS
ENDS IN DEATH--
OURS, OR
HERS.



IS IT POSSIBLE
THAT YOU
UNDERSTAND SO
LITTLE?

WE WERE
SO POWERFUL,
ONCE UPON A
TIME...



"...BUT
EVEN **WE**
WERE NOT
IMMORTAL..."



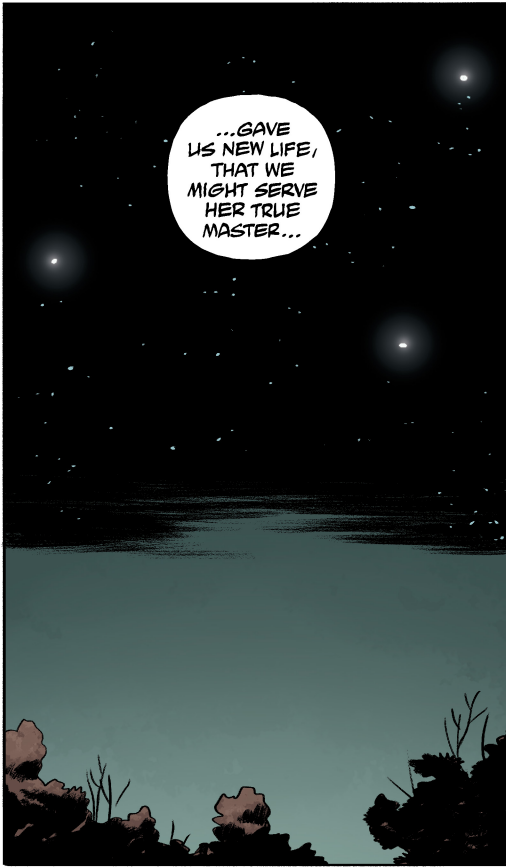
"WE DIED,
AND SLIPPED
BEHIND
THE VEIL..."



"...FOR WHAT
SEEMED AN
ETERNITY, WE
DRIFTED IN
THE AETHER..."



"...UNTIL
SHE CAME
FOR US..."



...GAVE
US NEW LIFE,
THAT WE
MIGHT SERVE
HER TRUE
MASTER...



WE ARE THE
NEW PRIESTS OF
THE RED KING,
FOREVER-
MORE.

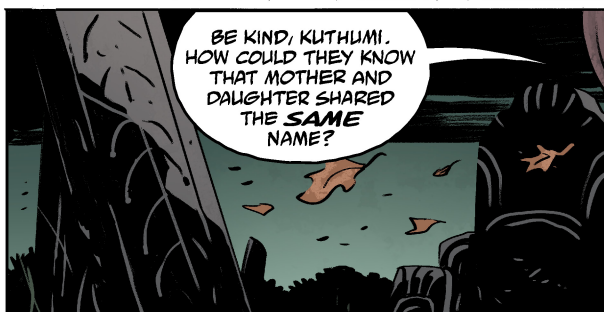
AND YOU...
ERRANT
THREAD...ARE
INTRUDING
WHERE YOU
DO NOT
BELONG.



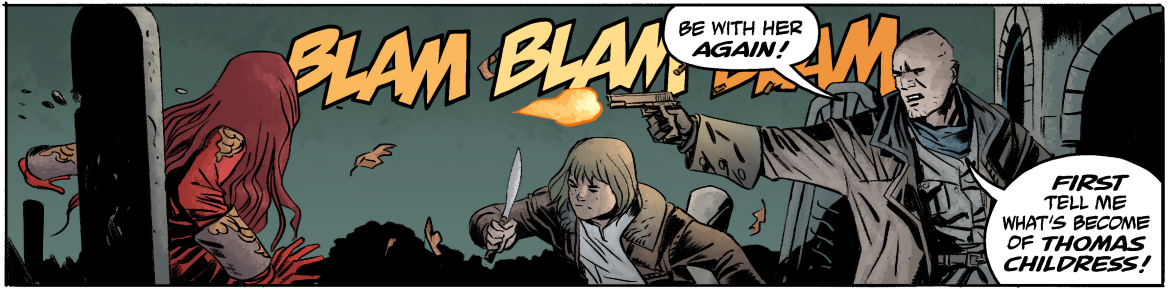
YOUR
PRIESTESS IS
DEAD. WE DROVE
HELENA'S GHOST OUT
OF PRINCESS RUKIYE'S
BODY. IF SHE WAS YOUR
LEADER, YOU'RE ON
YOUR OWN.

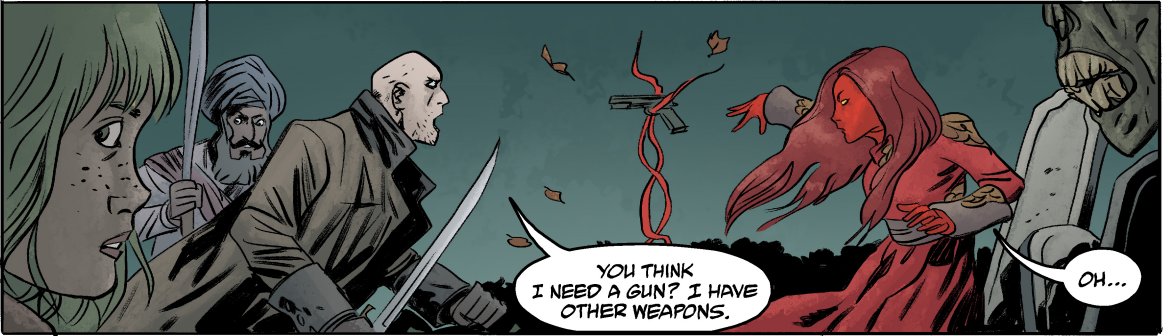
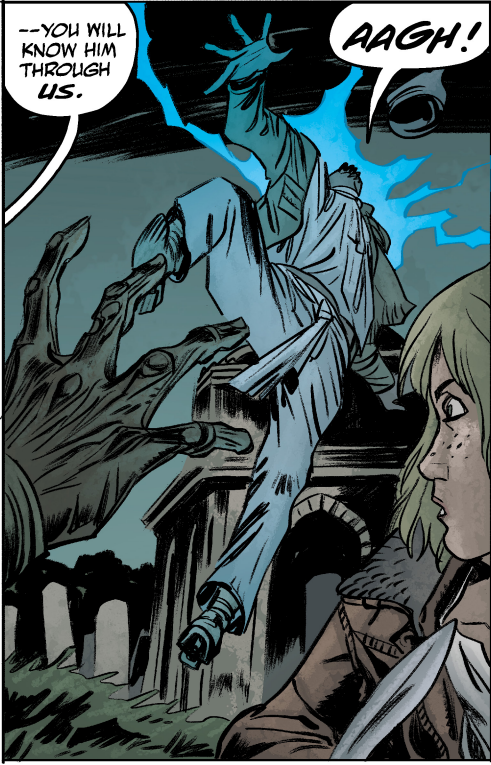


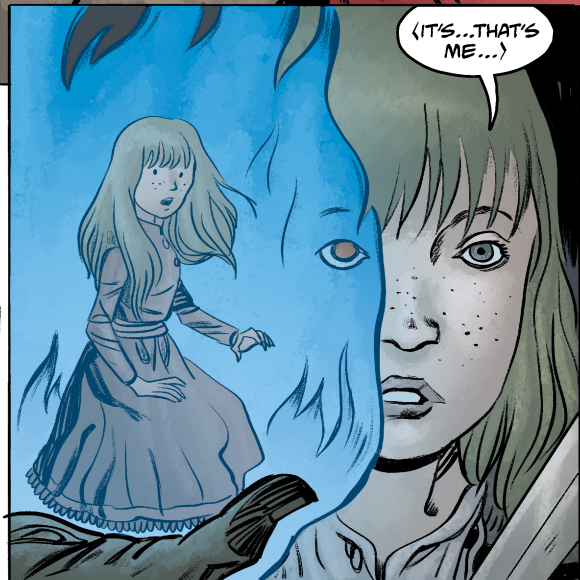
NOW,
TELL US
WHERE
TO FIND THE
BLOOD-RED
WITCH.



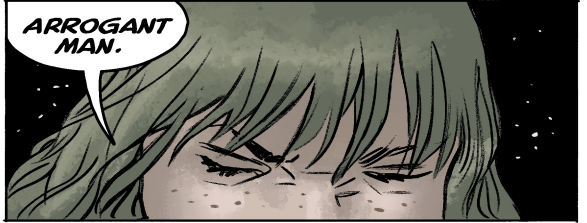








(TRANSLATED FROM THE ESTONIAN)





ДАЖЕ
ПОКОЙНИК
МОЖЕТ
УМЕРЕТЬ
ДВАЖДЫ.



ДАЖЕ ПОКОЙНИК
МОЖЕТ УМЕРЕТЬ
ДВАЖДЫ.



THANK YOU,
MY FRIEND. I
THOUGHT FOR
CERTAIN--

NO!



WITH
ALL HER
MAGIC--

--THE
POWER OF
THE RED
KING RAGING
INSIDE
HER...



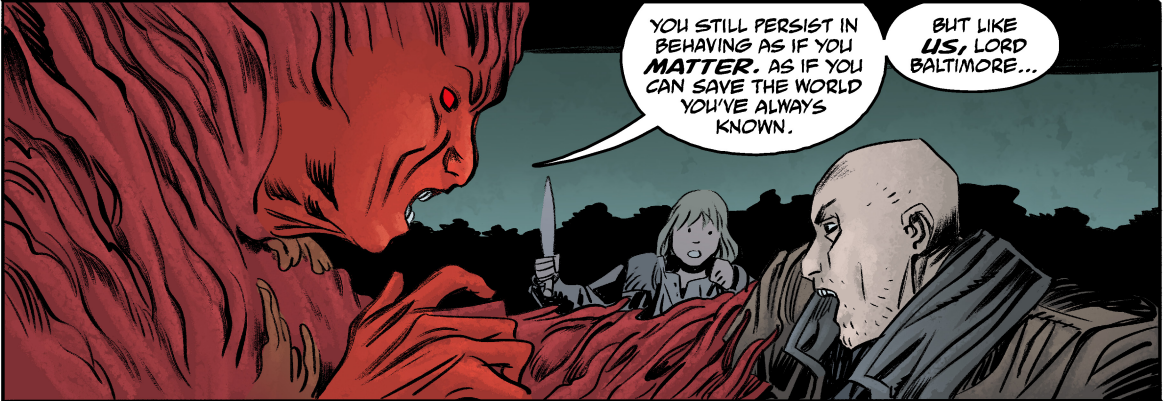


BUT WE'RE ALL DEAD HERE, HELENA. EACH AND EVERY ONE.

SHRIPT



WHAT?



YOU STILL PERSIST IN BEHAVING AS IF YOU **MATTER**. AS IF YOU CAN SAVE THE WORLD YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN.

BUT LIKE **US**, LORD BALTIMORE...

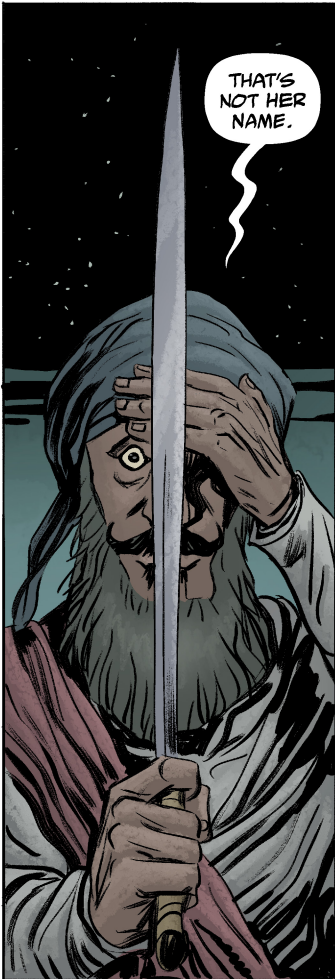


...SO VERY **MUCH** LIKE **US**...



...THE WORLD IS **ALREADY** DEAD.

URRKH--!





THE NAME HAS
BEEN ECHOING
IN MY MIND
SINCE WE FIRST
HEARD IT...



...MOTHER AND
DAUGHTER--
BOTH HELENA
VON HAHN.

BUT THE
DAUGHTER
WAS KNOWN BY
ANOTHER NAME.
INFAMOUS.
NOTORIOUS...



... YOU TOLD ME
THE STORY OF THE
MAGICIAN AND THE
CURSE BELLS
AND THE UGLY,
MISSHAPEN THING
HE BROUGHT **BACK**
FROM THE
GRAVE...

...THE
BLOOD-RED
WITCH...

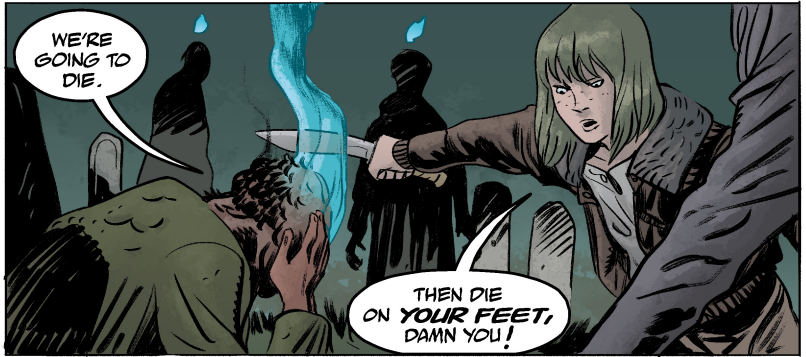
IT
CAN'T
BE.



"...IT'S MADAME
BLAVATSKY."



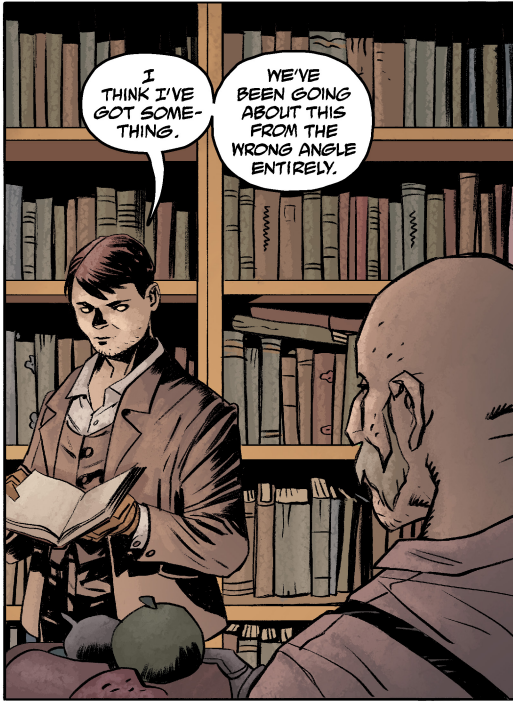
NO.



CHAPTER FIVE







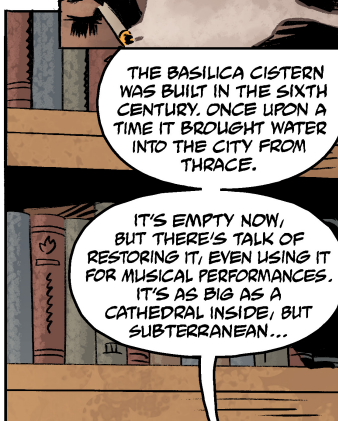


PROFESSOR, IS THERE SOME-
WHERE...IN THE CITY THAT
MIGHT...MIGHT BE DESCRIBED
AS THE MOTHER OF
MONSTERS? SOMEPLACE
ALMOST...



WOMB-
LIKE.

YOU MAY
HAVE SOME-
THING AFTER
ALL.



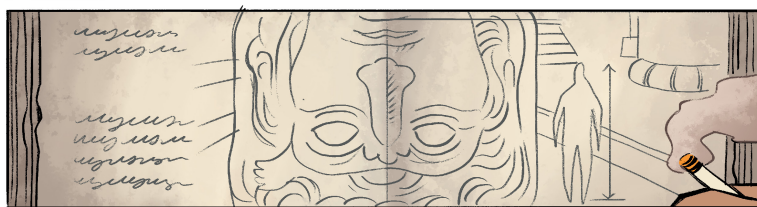
THE BASILICA CISTERN
WAS BUILT IN THE SIXTH
CENTURY. ONCE UPON A
TIME IT BROUGHT WATER
INTO THE CITY FROM
THRACE.

IT'S EMPTY NOW,
BUT THERE'S TALK OF
RESTORING IT, EVEN USING IT
FOR MUSICAL PERFORMANCES.
IT'S AS BIG AS A
CATHEDRAL INSIDE, BUT
SUBTERRANEAN...



...AND THERE ARE
TWO COLUMNS WHOSE
BASES ARE CARVINGS
OF THE HEAD OF THE
GORGON, MEDUSA,
WHO SOME LEGENDS
CALL---

THE MOTHER OF
MONSTERS.



THANK YOU,
PROFESSOR!
WE COULDN'T HAVE
CRACKED IT WITH-
OUT YOU!

BUT--

COME ALONG,
DR. ROSE. NOW
COMES THE BIT
WHERE I DO
MY BEST
WORK...



"...IT'S
BOUND
TO TURN
BLOODY
FROM
HERE ON
OUT."

YOU'RE
A FOOL, BALTIMORE.
YOU HAD YOUR
VENGEANCE. YOU COULD
HAVE GONE HOME
TO YOUR ISLAND AND
GROWN OLD, BUT
NOW...



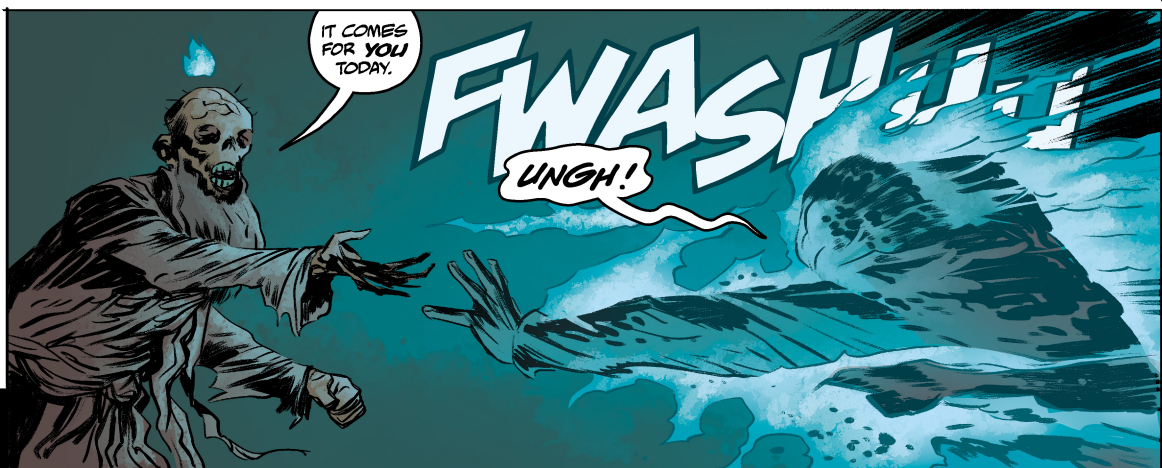
NO...
PLEASE...



...NOW
IT'S TOO
LATE FOR
YOU.

TOO
LATE FOR
ALL OF
YOU.







IF **DEATH** IS
COMING, THEN
DELIVER IT!
KILL US, OR
WE WILL--

SOFIA,
STOP IT!



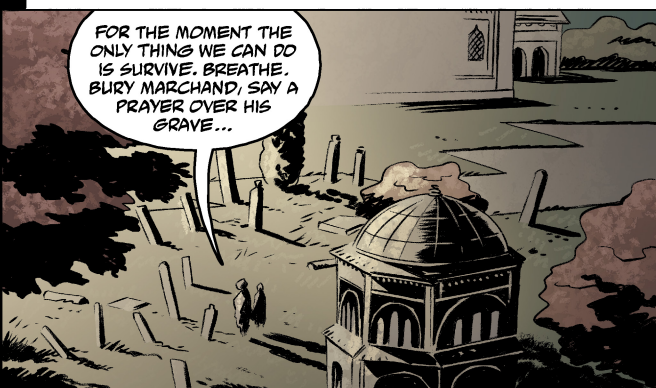
I'M SORRY. I
THOUGHT YOU WERE
DYING. I THOUGHT
I WAS THE ONLY
ONE LEFT AND I
DIDN'T WANT TO...TO
FACE THE END
ALONE.

YOU WON'T.
I'M STILL WITH
YOU. SICK AS A
DOG, BUT STILL
ALIVE.



I ONLY WISH
WE COULD SAY
THE SAME FOR
MARCHAND.

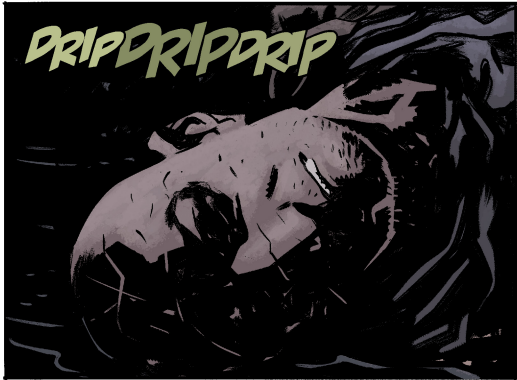
WHAT DO WE DO
NOW? WE DON'T
HAVE ANY IDEA
WHERE THEY'VE
GONE...WHERE
THE BLOOD-RED
WITCH TOOK
HENRY.

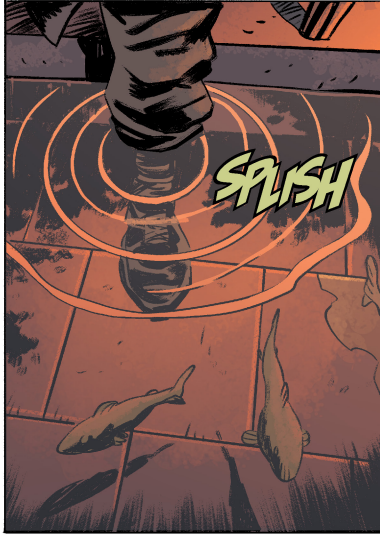
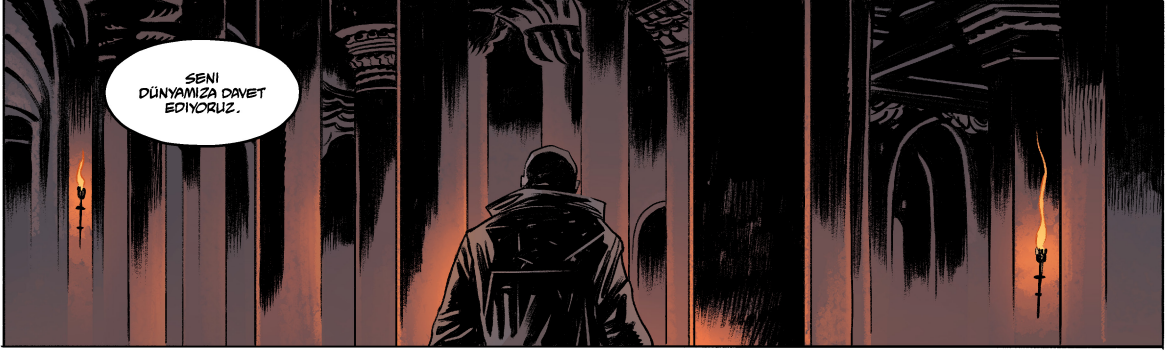


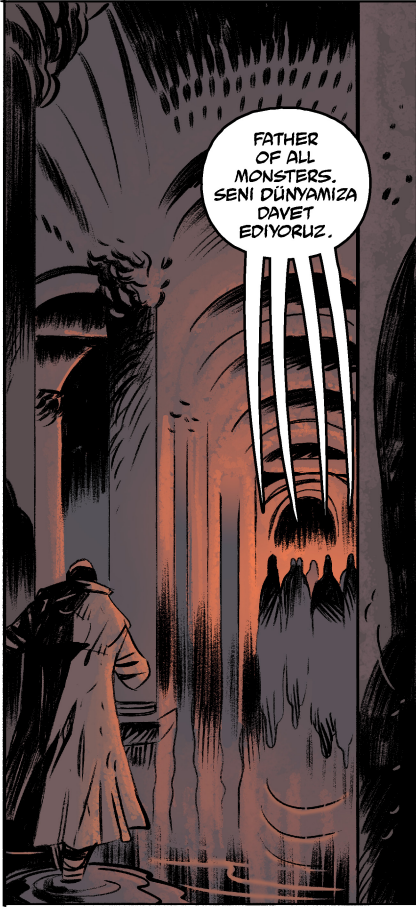
FOR THE MOMENT THE
ONLY THING WE CAN DO
IS SURVIVE. BREATHE.
BURY MARCHAND, SAY A
PRAYER OVER HIS
GRAVE...



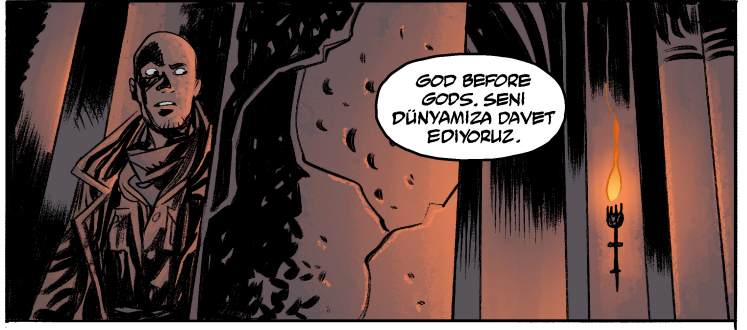
"...AND WAIT
FOR A SIGN."







FATHER
OF ALL
MONSTERS.
SENI DÜNYAMIZA
DAVET
EDİYORUZ.



GOD BEFORE
GODS. SENİ
DÜNYAMIZA DAVET
EDİYORUZ.



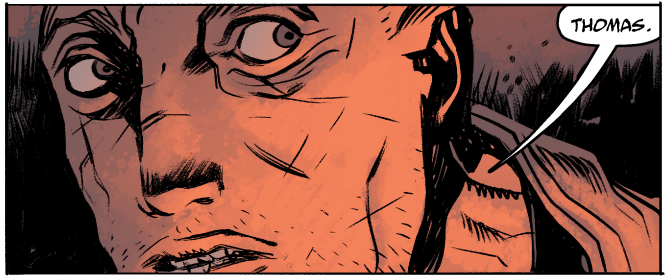
GRANT US THE
BLESSINGS OF
THE VOID.

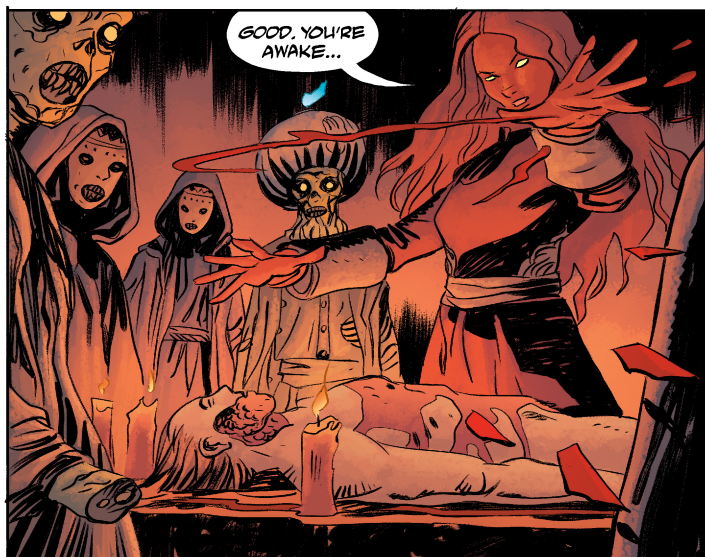


BU ETİ
KENDİ ETİN
GİBİ AL.



BU
ETİ KENDİ
ETİN GİBİ
AL.











I HAVE
BECOME
DEATH.



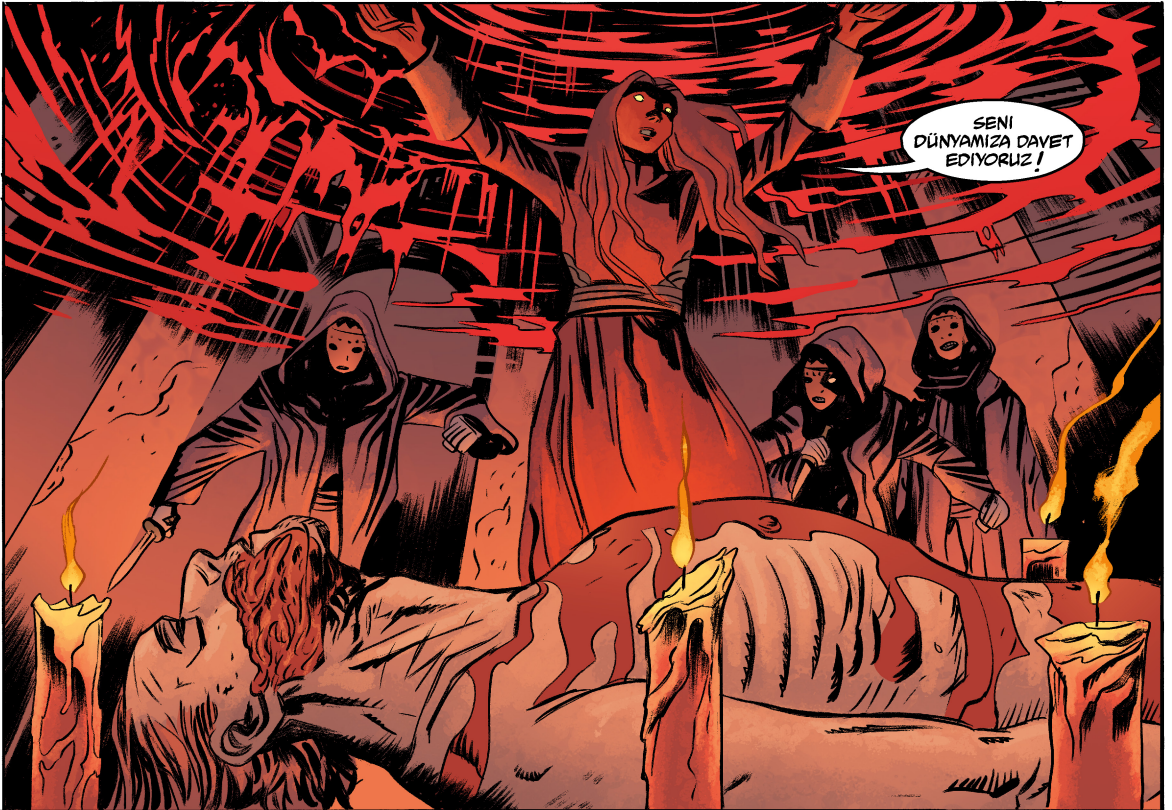
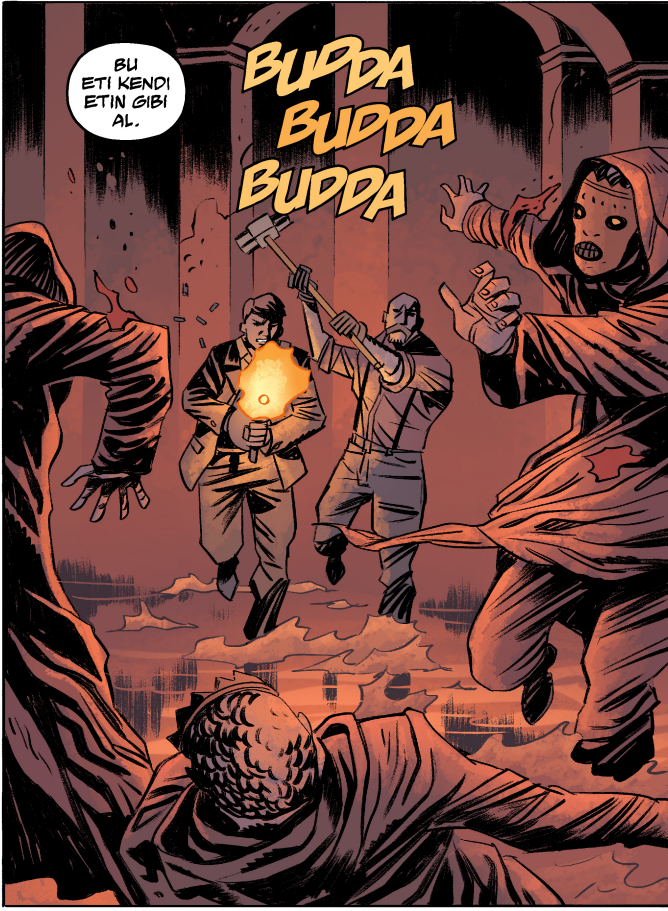
BÜ
ETİ KENDİ
ETİN GİBİ
AL.



KANIMI
KENDİ KANIN
GİBİ AL.



SENİ
DÜNYAMIZA DAVET
EDİYORUZ.





YES, MY LORD.

WELCOME...



SENİ DÜNYAMIZA DAVET EDİYORUZ!



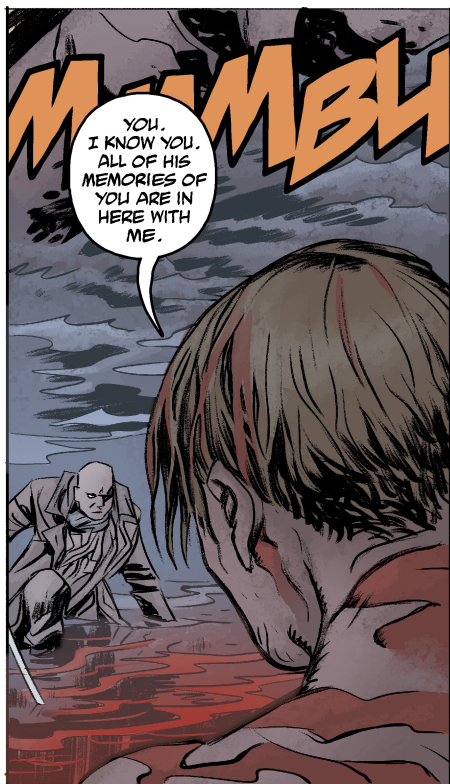
UHNFH!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING? I HAVE TO KILL HER!

STOP FIGHTING US, HENRY! WE HAD TO DO IT!









BALTIMORETM

EMPTY GRAVES

SKETCHBOOK

Notes by Peter Bergting and Ben Stenbeck



Peter Bergting: I thought it'd be a nice touch to have one of those classic group photos of our heroes, reminiscent of WWI soldiers gathered before that one final fight.

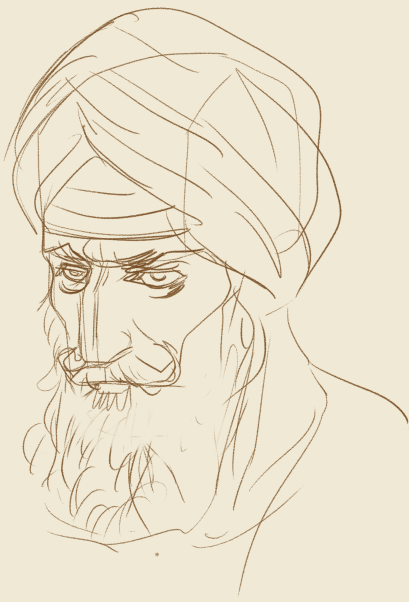


One of my favorite scenes from the book was Baltimore, just sitting there, looking out over the sea.



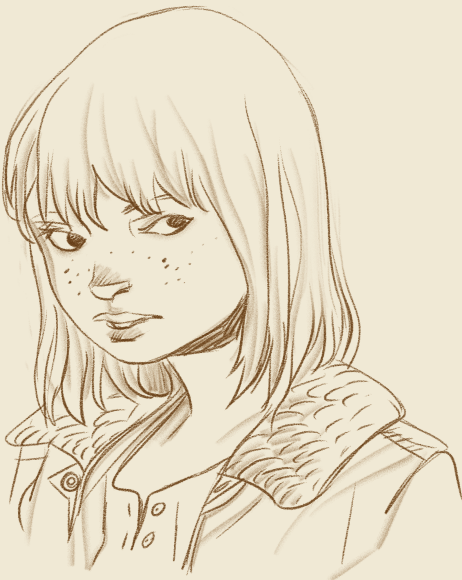
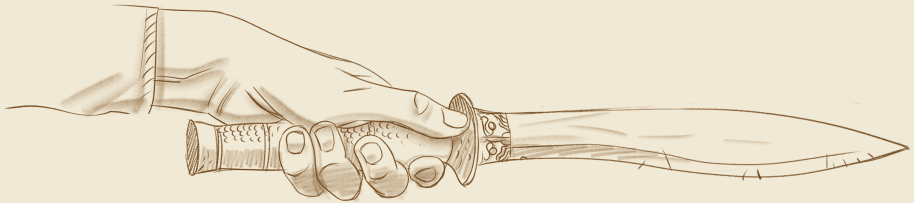
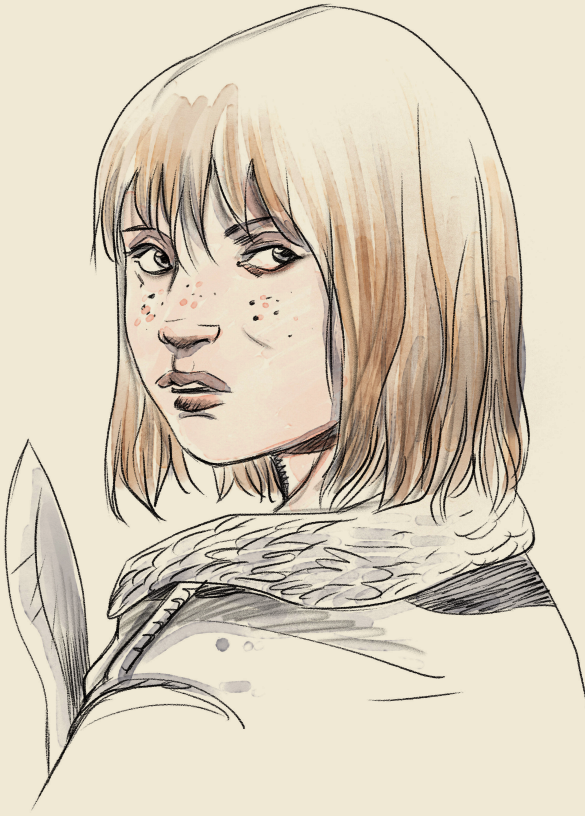
I have a neighbor that looks uncannily like Lord Henry. In fact they could probably be twins, and I can't stop thinking how awesome he'd look in a trench coat and wooden leg.



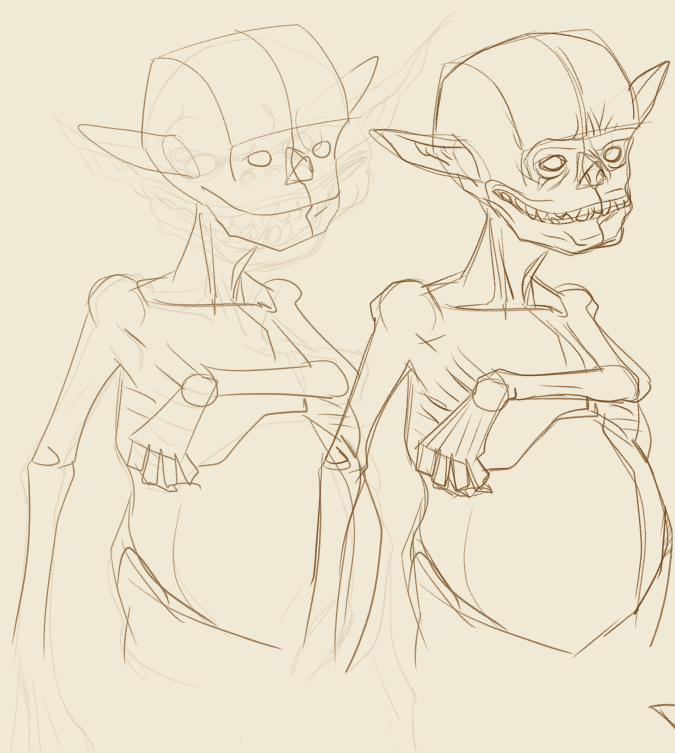


Harish is one of my favorite characters ever. I love how composed he is, never faltering. I don't like drawing his beard though. Any beard, really. And there are so many beards in this book.

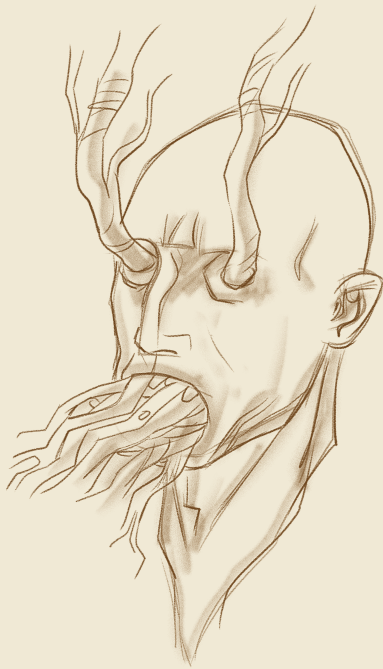
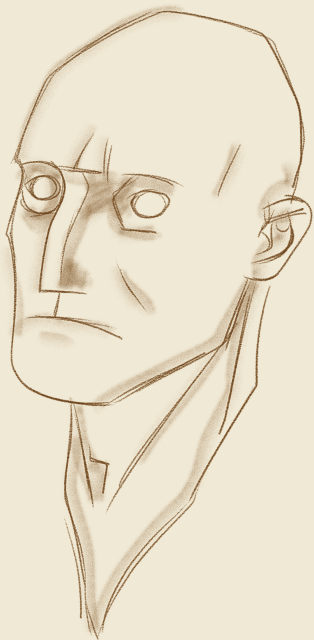




Sofia has gone through a couple of stages in the series. In the beginning I didn't really know where she'd end up, or even if she'd be a recurring character. She's just getting tougher and tougher. If Mike and Chris kill her in the next series, I will be very unhappy!



The child demons in the village were probably the hardest monsters to draw. I wanted to retain that emaciated look, turning them into little monsters, but it was a tough balance.



I love drawing tree monsters. Always have, always will. There's something in Norse folklore (*blotrese*) that was just right for this.



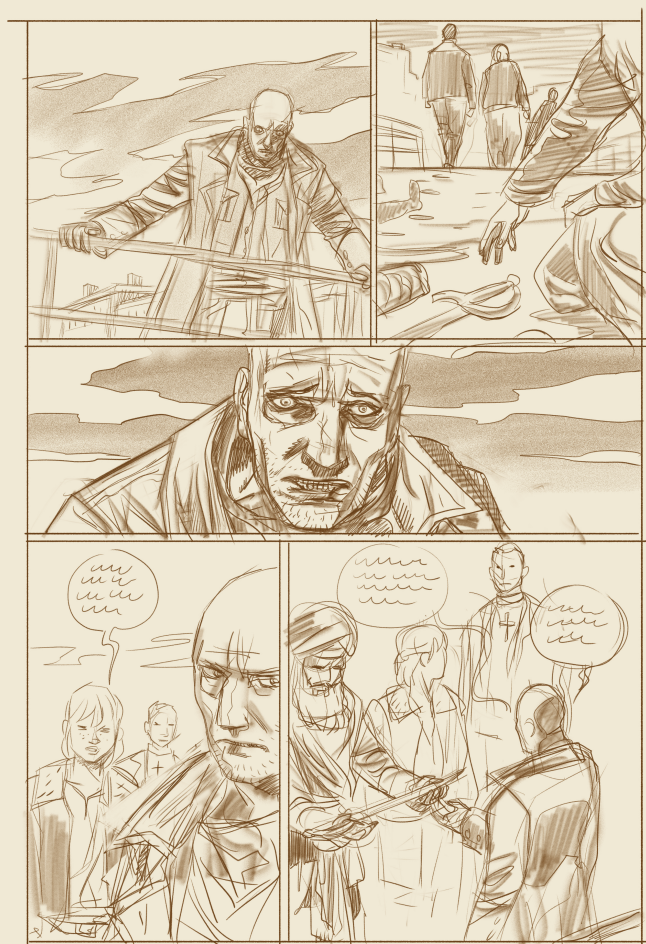
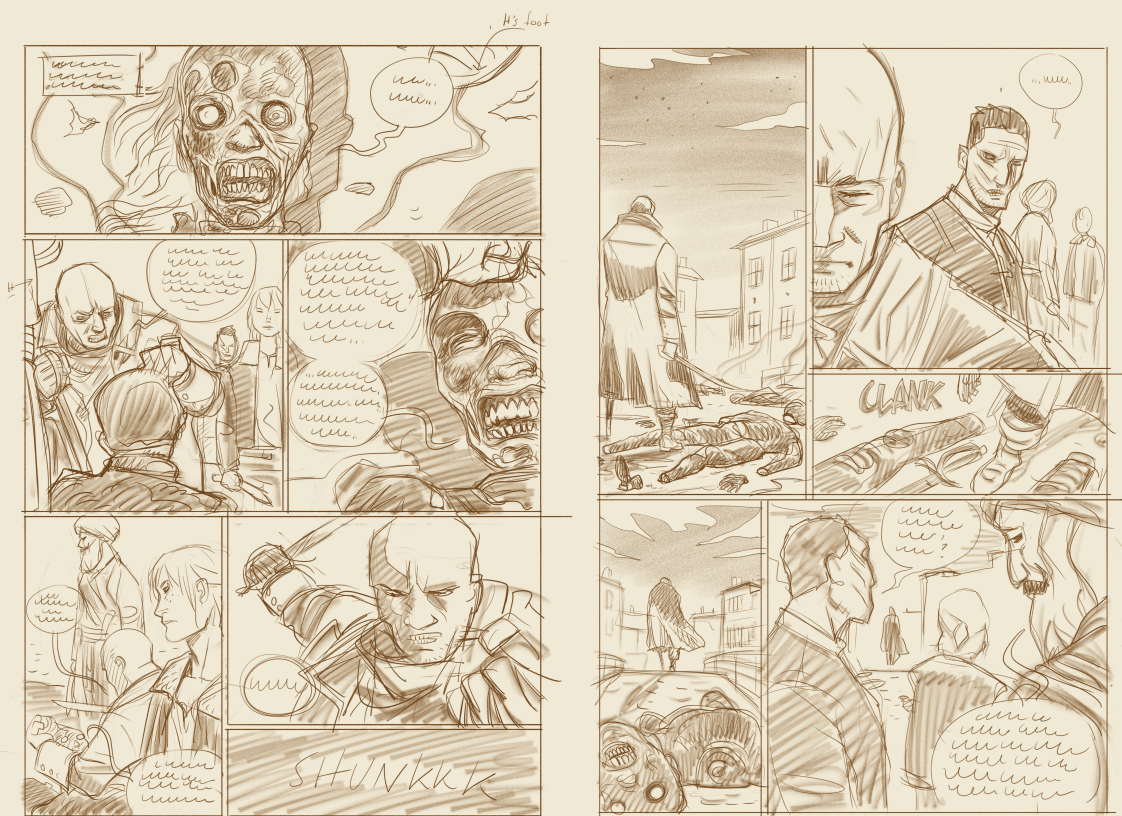
I could probably spend the rest of my life drawing little demons. Mike had some very specific ideas, and we tossed some things around before we settled on the red one with the long ears.





I did love this little guy in the oversized cloak with that weird mouth, though. Hope I can draw him in some other book one day.



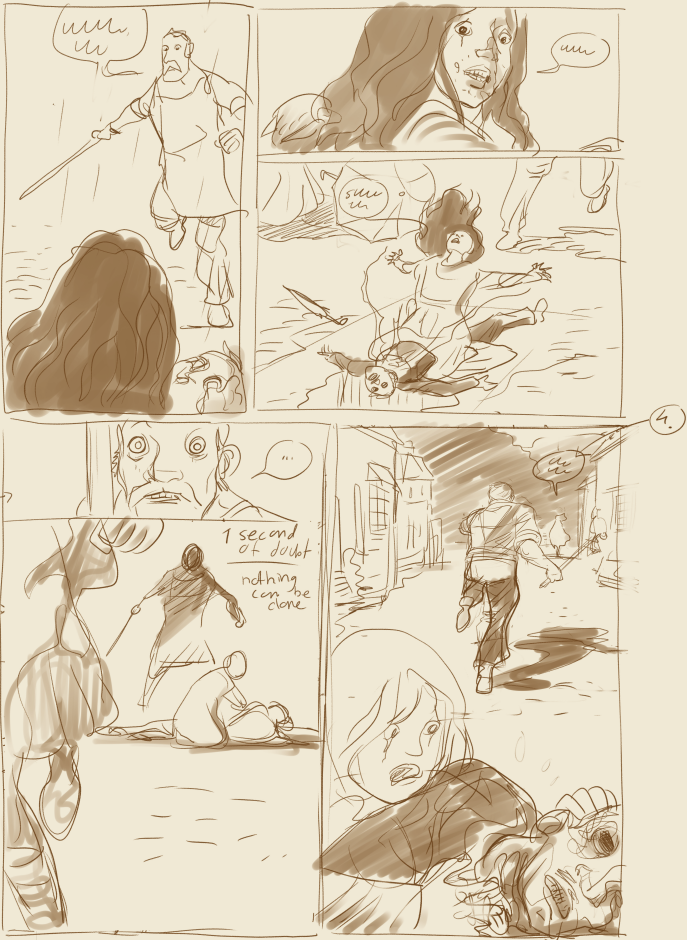


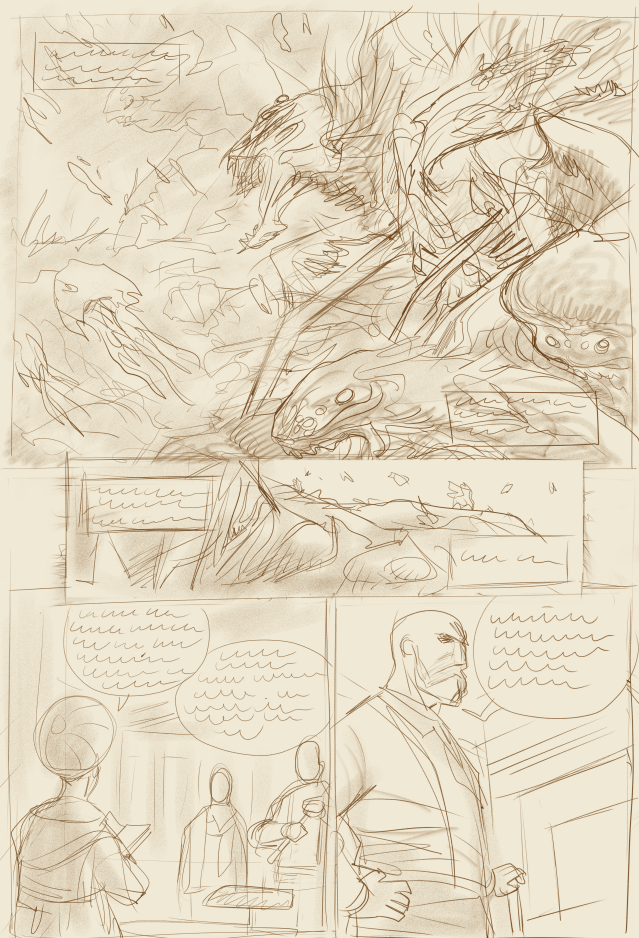
This was a fantastic scene to draw. So much emotion, but with most of it conveyed without words, I had to focus all that turmoil in Henry's face. I do have trouble providing clear penciled pages, even more than making thumbnails and layouts, since I know I will redraw the same details ten to twenty times while inking to get it right. If I had to pencil for someone else to ink my pencils, I would probably go mad. But this was one instance where I was actually pretty happy with the pencils.

I remember Scott commenting on Harish giving Baltimore the sword in the last panel, and Lord Henry reaching for the blade and not the grip.

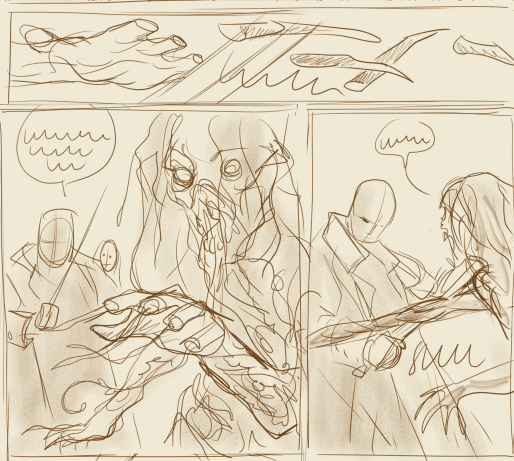
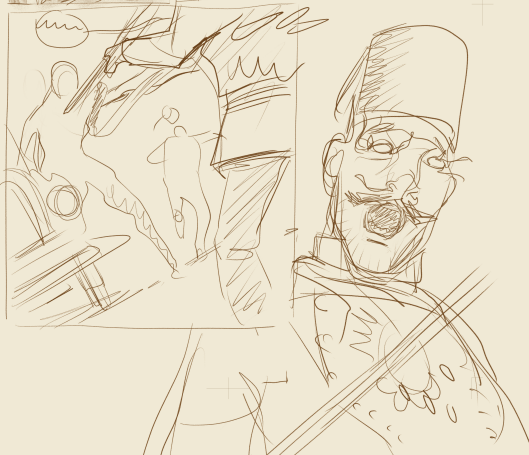
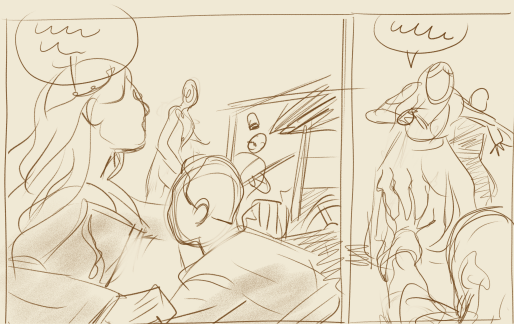
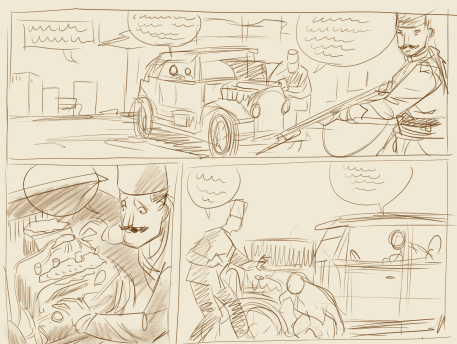
I had a bit of a problem drawing these pages. Not so much with the characters, but with the goblin. I did numerous revisions trying to make it look scary, but that grin just made it look cheesy. And it was such a fantastic idea in the script, like this big tick, perched on her back sucking the life and sanity out of poor Mr. Kidd's wife. The coloring really brought this home, though.

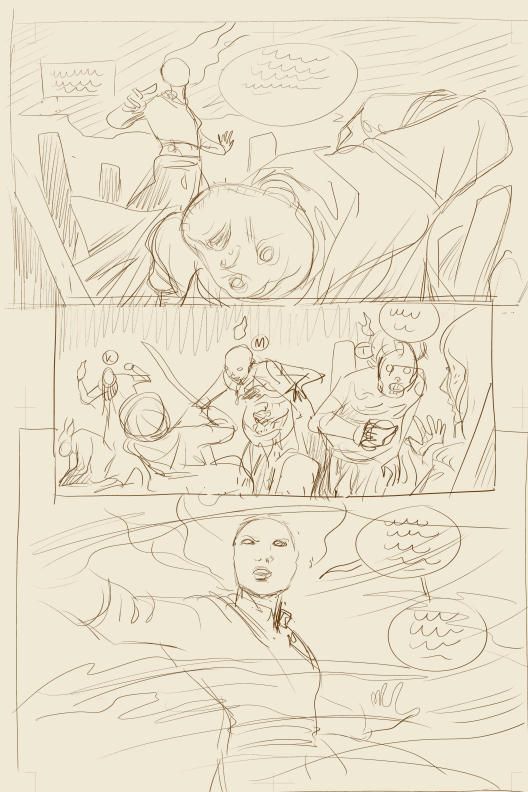
I added this to step time





If there's a chance to draw big crazy monsters, I'm all in. And I think we reached peak crazy with this page (so far, at least). The hardest part isn't coming up with the monsters; it's finding the balance with all that action going on in the panel. It's the same with the rest of the pages. The craziness has to be balanced with real emotions. Scott and the gang keep me focused on the stuff I miss, like switching angles to make the action easier to read.





The cemetery scene was a blast to draw. The very specific design of the stones and the temple lent itself naturally to the Mignolaverse. I know I'm all over the map when inking, but I try to keep the style consistent unless the action takes me in a different direction. The only thing I really try to stay clear of is veering too close to Mike's style, and I kept redrawing to avoid that.

If there's one thing that bugged me, it's that the Sultans kept going through bodies as they were mowed down, and I had to make sure that they were at least somewhat recognizable as three specific individuals throughout the scenes.



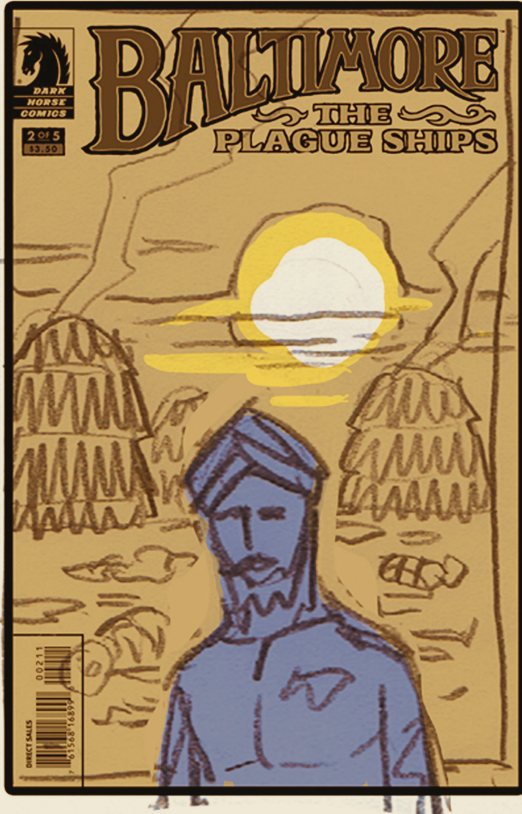
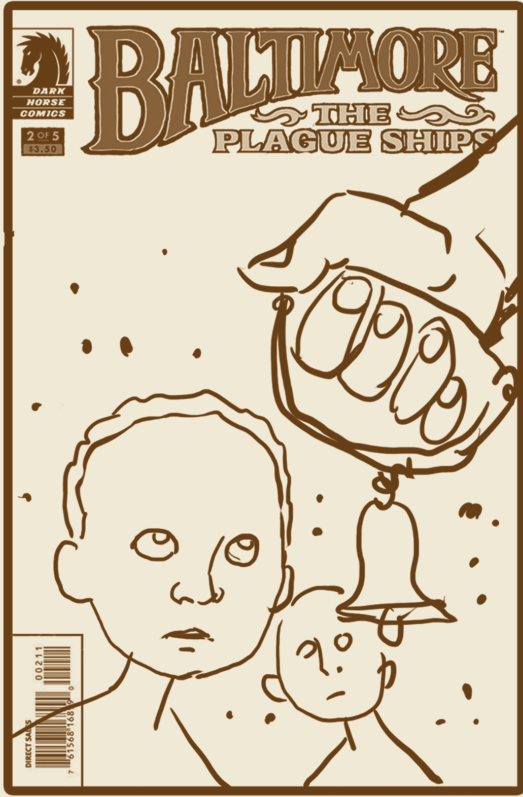


Ben Stenbeck: Thumbnails for the issue one cover . . .





These aren't all the sketches I did for issue one, but it was taking a while, until I did *this* weird sketch. It just seemed strange enough to be interesting. Everyone agreed on it.



Thumbnails for issue two.



The green one was my initial idea for the issue four cover, but once I decided I wanted to do a “pincushion” Baltimore on the issue five cover, I thought something quieter would work better, and tried the shot of the witch on the bed. But then, because of the Blavatsky revelation in the issue, I made the issue four cover a bit of a nod to Mike’s cover for *The Curse Bells* #5.

MIKE MIGNOLA's fascination with ghosts and monsters began at an early age; reading *Dracula* at age twelve introduced him to Victorian literature and folklore, from which he has never recovered. Starting in 1982 as a bad inker for Marvel Comics, he swiftly evolved into a not-so-bad artist. By the late 1980s, he had begun to develop his own unique graphic style, with mainstream projects like *Cosmic Odyssey* and *Batman: Gotham by Gaslight*. In 1994, he published the first *Hellboy* series through Dark Horse. There are over fifteen *Hellboy* graphic novels (with more on the way), several spinoff titles (*B.P.R.D.*, *Lobster Johnson*, *Abe Sapien*, and *Sir Edward Grey: Witchfinder*), prose books, animated films, and two live-action films starring Ron Perlman. Along the way he worked on Francis Ford Coppola's film *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), was a production designer for Disney's *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (2001), and was the visual consultant to director Guillermo del Toro on *Blade II* (2002), *Hellboy* (2004), and *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* (2008). Mike's books have earned numerous awards and are published in a great many countries. Mike lives somewhere in Southern California with his wife, daughter, and cat.

CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN is the author of such novels as *Of Saints and Shadows*, *The Myth Hunters*, *The Boys Are Back in Town*, *Strangewood*, and *Tin Men*. He has also written books for teens and young adults, including *When Rose Wakes*, *Soulless*, *Poison Ink*, and *The Secret Journeys of Jack London*, coauthored with Tim Lebbon. His other work with Mike Mignola includes the novels *Baltimore; or, The Steadfast Tin Soldier and the Vampire* and *Joe Golem and the Drowning City*. Golden was born and raised in Massachusetts, where he still lives with his family. His original novels have been published in more than fourteen languages in countries around the world. Please visit him at ChristopherGolden.com.

PETER BERGTING has spent all of his life drawing silly and scary things and made his comic book debut with the 2006 series *The Portent*. He loves working on his slice of the Mignolaverse and plops down in front of the drawing board with a big, cheesy grin every day.

“Mignola and Golden continue to impress, pushing far past the initial adaptation of the Baltimore novel and moving on to break fresh ground.”—Comic Bastards



“Creepy, classic horror that festers under your skin long after you’ve finished. Recommended.”—SciFiPulse

“The funereal quality of this story is beautifully done.”—Multiversity Comics

“A richly detailed world, and the historical details are expertly blended with the story’s over-arching occult themes.”—Big Comic Page

